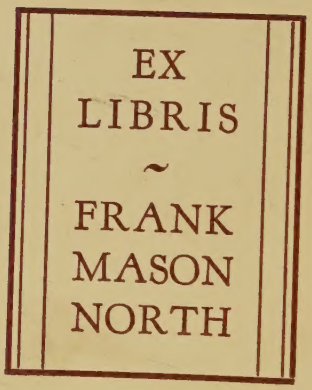
More Jonathan Papers

By Elisabeth Woodbridge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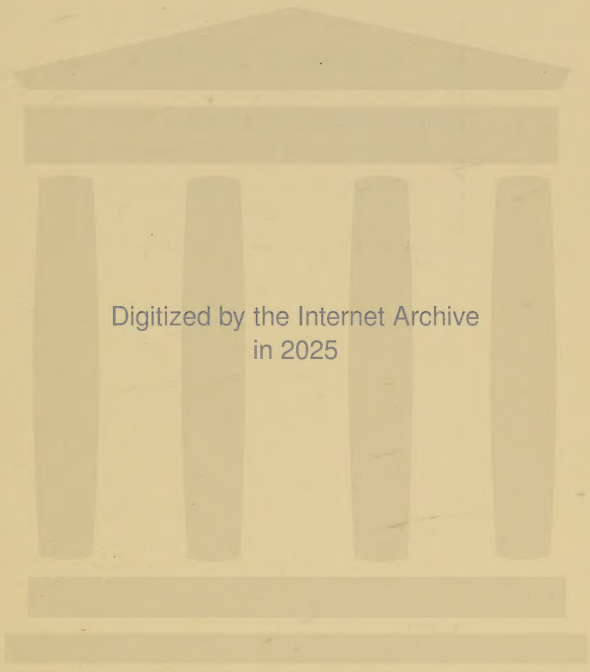
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By Elisabeth Woodbridge

MORE JONATHAN PAPERS.
THE JONATHAN PAPERS.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

More Jonathan Papers

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By

Elisabeth (Woodbridge) Morris

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1915

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Published November 1915

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TO
JONATHAN

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More Jonathan Papers

I

The Searchings of Jonathan

"WHAT I find it hard to understand is, why a person who can see a spray of fringed gentian in the middle of a meadow can't see a book on the sitting-room table."

"The reason why I can see the gentian," said Jonathan, "is because the gentian is there."

"So is the book," I responded.

"Which table?" he asked.

"The one with the lamp on it. It's a red book, about *so* big."

"It is n't there; but, just to satisfy you, I'll look again."

He returned in a moment with an argumentative expression of countenance. "It is n't there," he said firmly. "Will anything else do instead?"

"No, I wanted you to read that special thing. Oh, dear! And I have all these things in my lap! And I know it *is* there."

"And I *know* it is n't." He stretched himself out in the hammock and watched me as I rather ostentatiously laid down thimble, scissors, needle, cotton, and material and set out for the sitting-room table. There were a number of books on it, to be sure. I glanced rapidly through the piles, fingered the lower books, pushed aside a magazine, and pulled out from beneath it the book I wanted. I returned to the hammock and handed it over. Then, after possessing myself, again rather ostentatiously, of material, cotton, needle, scissors, and thimble, I sat down.

"It's the second essay I specially thought we'd like," I said.

"Just for curiosity," said Jonathan, with an impersonal air, "where did you find it?"

"Find what?" I asked innocently.

"The book."

"Oh! On the table."

"Which table?"

"The one with the lamp on it."

"I should like to know where."

"Why — just there — on the table. There was an 'Atlantic' on top of it, to be sure."

"I saw the 'Atlantic.' Blest if it looked as though it had anything under it! Besides, I was looking for it on top of things. You said you laid it down there just before luncheon, and I did n't think it could have crawled in under so quick."

"When you're looking for a thing," I said, "you must n't think, you must look. Now go ahead and read."

If this were a single instance, or even if it were one of many illustrating a common human frailty, it would hardly be worth setting down. But the frailty under consideration has come to seem to me rather particularly masculine. Are not all the Jonathans in the world continually being sent to some sitting-room table for something, and coming back to assert, with more or less pleasantness, according to their temperament, that it is not there? The incident, then, is not isolated; it is typical of a vast group. For Jonathan, read Everyman; for the red book, read any particular thing that you want Him to bring; for the sitting-room table, read the place

where you know it is and Everyman says it is n't.

This, at least, is my thesis. It is not, however, unchallenged. Jonathan has challenged it when, from time to time, as occasion offered, I have lightly sketched it out for him. Sometimes he argues that my instances are really isolated cases and that their evidence is not cumulative, at others he takes refuge in a *tu quoque* — in itself a confession of weakness — and alludes darkly to "top shelves" and "bottom drawers." But let us have no mysteries. These phrases, considered as arguments, have their origin in certain incidents which, that all the evidence may be in, I will here set down.

Once upon a time I asked Jonathan to get me something from the top shelf in the closet. He went, and failed to find it. Then I went, and took it down. Jonathan, watching over my shoulder, said, "But that was n't the top shelf, I suppose you will admit."

Sure enough! There was a shelf above. "Oh, yes; but I don't count that shelf. We never use it, because nobody can reach it."

"How do you expect me to know which shelves you count and which you don't?"

"Of course, anatomically — structurally — it is one, but functionally it isn't there at all."

"I see," said Jonathan, so contentedly that I knew he was filing this affair away for future use.

On another occasion I asked him to get something for me from the top drawer of the old "high-boy" in the dining-room. He was gone a long while, and at last, growing impatient, I followed. I found him standing on an old wooden-seated chair, screw-driver in hand. A drawer on a level with his head was open, and he had hanging over his arm a gaudy collection of ancient table-covers and embroidered scarfs, mostly in shades of magenta.

"She stuck, but I've got her open now. I don't see any pillow-cases, though. It's all full of these things." He pumped his laden arm up and down, and the table-covers wagged gayly.

I sank into the chair and laughed. "Oh! Have you been prying at that all this time? Of *course* there's nothing in *that* drawer."

"There's where you're wrong. There's a great deal in it; I have n't taken out half. If you want to see —"

"I *don't* want to see! There's nothing I want less! What I mean is — I never put anything there."

"It's the top drawer." He was beginning to lay back the table-covers.

"But I can't reach it. And it's been stuck for ever so long."

"You said the top drawer."

"Yes, I suppose I did. Of course what I meant was the top one of the ones I use."

"I see, my dear. When you say top shelf you don't mean top shelf, and when you say top drawer you don't mean top drawer; in fact, when you say top you don't mean top at all — you mean the height of your head. Everything above that does n't count."

Jonathan was so pleased with this formulation of my attitude that he was not in the least irritated to have put out unnecessary work. And his satisfaction was deepened by one more incident. I had sent him to the bottom drawer of my bureau to get a shawl. He returned without it, and I was puzzled.

"Now, Jonathan, it's there, and it's the top thing."

"The real top," murmured Jonathan, "or just what you call top?"

"It's right in front," I went on; "and I don't see how even a man could fail to find it."

He proceeded to enumerate the contents of the drawer in such strange fashion that I began to wonder where he had been.

"I said my bureau."

"I went to your bureau."

"The bottom drawer."

"The bottom drawer. There was nothing but a lot of little boxes and —"

"Oh, *I* know what you did! You went to the secret drawer."

"Is n't that the bottom one?"

"Why, yes, in a way — of course it is; but it does n't exactly count — it's not one of the regular drawers — it has n't any knobs, or anything —"

"But it's a perfectly good drawer."

"Yes. But nobody is supposed to know it's there; it looks like a molding —"

"But I know it's there."

"Yes, of course."

"And you know I know it's there."

"Yes, yes; but I just don't think about that one in counting up. I see what you mean, of course."

"And I see what you mean. You mean that your shawl is in the bottom one of the regular drawers — with knobs — that can be alluded to in general conversation. Now I think I can find it."

He did. And in addition he amused himself by working out phrases about "when is a bottom drawer not a bottom drawer?" and "when is a top shelf not a top shelf?"

It is to these incidents — which I regard as isolated and negligible, and he regards as typical and significant — that he alludes on the occasions when he is unable to find a red book on the sitting-room table. In vain do I point out that when language is variable and fluid it is alive, and that there may be two opinions about the structural top and the functional top, whereas there can be but one as to the book being or not being on the table. He maintains a quiet cheerfulness, as of one who is conscious of being, if not invulnerable, at least well armed.

For a time he even tried to make believe that he was invulnerable as well — to set up the thesis that if the book was really on the table he could find it. But in this he suffered so many reverses that only strong natural pertinacity kept him from capitulation.

Is it necessary to recount instances? Every family can furnish them. As I allow myself to float off into a reminiscent dream I find my mind possessed by a continuous series of dissolving views in which Jonathan is always coming to me saying, "It is n't there," and I am always saying, "Please look again."

Though everything in the house seems to be in a conspiracy against him, it is perhaps with the fishing-tackle that he has most constant difficulties.

"My dear, have you any idea where my rod is? No, don't get up — I'll look if you'll just tell me where —"

"Probably in the corner behind the chest in the orchard room."

"I've looked there."

"Well, then, did you take it in from the wagon last night?"

"Yes, I remember doing it."

"What about the little attic? You might have put it up there to dry out."

"No. I took my wading boots up, but that was all."

"The dining-room? You came in that way."

He goes and returns. "Not there." I reflect deeply.

"Jonathan, are you *sure* it's not in that corner of the orchard room?"

"Yes, I'm sure; but I'll look again." He disappears, but in a moment I hear his voice calling, "No! Yours is here, but not mine."

I perceive that it is a case for me, and I get up. "You go and harness. I'll find it," I call.

There was a time when, under such conditions, I should have begun by hunting in all the unlikely places I could think of. Now I know better. I go straight to the corner of the orchard room. Then I call to Jonathan, just to relieve his mind.

"All right! I've found it."

"Where?"

"Here, in the orchard room."

"*Where* in the orchard room?"

"In the corner."

"What corner?"

"The usual corner — back of the chest."

"The devil!" Then he comes back to put his head in at the door. "What are you laughing at?"

"Nothing. What are you talking about the devil for? Anyway, it is n't the devil; it 's the brownie."

For there seems no doubt that the things he hunts for are possessed of supernatural powers; and the theory of a brownie in the house, with a special grudge against Jonathan, would perhaps best account for the way in which they elude his search but leap into sight at my approach. There is, to be sure, one other explanation, but it is one that does not suggest itself to him, or appeal to him when suggested by me, so there is no need to dwell upon it.

If it is n't the rod, it is the landing-net, which has hung itself on a nail a little to the left or right of the one he had expected to see it on; or his reel, which has crept into a corner of the tackle drawer and held a ball of string in front of itself to distract his vision; or a bunch of snell hooks, which, aware of its pro-

tective coloring, has snuggled up against the shady side of the drawer and tucked its pink-papered head underneath a gay pickerel-spoon.

Fishing-tackle is, clearly, "possessed," but in other fields Jonathan is not free from trouble. Finding anything on a bureau seems to offer peculiar obstacles. It is perhaps a big, black-headed pin that I want. "On the pincushion, Jonathan."

He goes, and returns with two sizes of safety-pins and one long hat-pin.

"No, dear, those won't do. A small, black-headed one — at least small compared with a hat-pin, large compared with an ordinary pin."

"Common or house pin?" he murmurs, quoting a friend's phrase.

"Do look again! I hate to drop this to go myself."

"When a man does a job, he gets his tools together first."

"Yes; but they say women should n't copy men, they should develop along their own lines. Please go."

He goes, and comes back. "You don't want fancy gold pins, I suppose?"

"No, no! Here, you hold this, and I'll go."

I dash to the bureau. Sure enough, he is right about the cushion. I glance hastily about. There, in a little saucer, are a half-dozen of the sort I want. I snatch some and run back.

"Well, it was n't in the cushion, I bet."

"No," I admit; "it was in a saucer just behind the cushion."

"You said cushion."

"I know. It's all right."

"Now, if you had said simply 'bureau,' I'd have looked in other places on it."

"Yes, you'd have *looked* in other places!" I could not forbear responding. There is, I grant, another side to this question. One evening when I went upstairs I found a partial presentation of it, in the form of a little newspaper clipping, pinned on my cushion. It read as follows: —

> "My dear," said she, "please run and bring me the needle from the haystack."
> "Oh, I don't know which haystack."
> "Look in all the haystacks — you can't miss it; there 's only one needle."

Jonathan was in the cellar at the moment. When he came up, he said, "Did I hear any one laughing?"

"I don't know. Did you?"

"I thought maybe it was you."

"It might have been. Something amused me — I forget what."

I accused Jonathan of having written it himself, but he denied it. Some other Jonathan, then; for, as I said, this is not a personal matter, it is a world matter. Let us grant, then, a certain allowance for those who hunt in woman-made haystacks. But what about pockets? Is not a man lord over his own pockets? And are they not nevertheless as so many haystacks piled high for his confusion? Certain it is that Jonathan has nearly as much trouble with his pockets as he does with the corners and cupboards and shelves and drawers of his house. It usually happens over our late supper, after his day in town. He sets down his teacup, struck with a sudden memory. He feels in his vest pockets — first the right, then the left. He proceeds to search himself, murmuring, "I thought something came to-day that I wanted to show you — oh, here! no, that is n't it. I thought I put it — no, those are to be — what 's this? No, that 's a memorandum. Now, where in —"

He runs through the papers in his pockets twice over, and in the second round I watch him narrowly, and perhaps see a corner of an envelope that does not look like office work. "There, Jonathan! What's that? No, not that — that!"

He pulls it out with an air of immense relief. "There! I knew I had something. That's it."

When we travel, the same thing happens with the tickets, especially if they chance to be costly and complicated ones, with all the shifts and changes of our journey printed thick upon their faces. The conductor appears at the other end of the car. Jonathan begins vaguely to fumble without lowering his paper. Pocket after pocket is browsed through in this way. Then the paper slides to his knee and he begins a more thorough investigation, with all the characteristic clapping and diving motions that seem to be necessary. Some pockets must always be clapped and others dived into to discover their contents.

No tickets. The conductor is halfway up the car. Jonathan's face begins to grow seri-

ous. He rises and looks on the seat and under it. He sits down and takes out packet after packet of papers and goes over them with scrupulous care. At this point I used to become really anxious — to make hasty calculations as to our financial resources, immediate and ultimate — to wonder if conductors ever really put nice people like us off trains. But that was long ago. I know now that Jonathan has never lost a ticket in his life. So I glance through the paper that he has dropped or watch the landscape until he reaches a certain stage of calm and definite pessimism, when he says, "I must have pulled them out when I took out those postcards in the other car. Yes, that's just what has happened." Then, the conductor being only a few seats away, I beg Jonathan to look once more in his vest pocket, where he always puts them. To oblige me he looks, though without faith, and lo! this time the tickets fairly fling themselves upon him, with smiles almost curling up their corners. Does the brownie travel with us, then?

I begin to suspect that some of the good men who have been blamed for forgetting to

mail letters in their pockets have been, not indeed blameless, but at least misunderstood. Probably they do not forget. Probably they hunt for the letters and cannot find them, and conclude that they have already mailed them.

In the matter of the home haystacks Jonathan's confidence in himself has at last been shaken. For a long time, when he returned to me after some futile search, he used to say, "Of course you can look for it if you like, but it is *not* there." But man is a reasoning, if not altogether a reasonable, being, and with a sufficient accumulation of evidence, especially when there is some one constantly at hand to interpret its teachings, almost any set of opinions, however fixed, may be shaken. So here.

Once when we shut up the farm for the winter I left my fountain pen behind. This was little short of a tragedy, but I comforted myself with the knowledge that Jonathan was going back that week-end for a day's hunt.

"Be sure to get the pen first of all," I said, "and put it in your pocket."

"Where is it?" he asked.

"In the little medicine cupboard over the

fireplace in the orchard room, standing up at the side of the first shelf."

"Why not on your desk?" he asked.

"Because I was writing tags in there, and set it up so it would be out of the way."

"And it *was* out of the way. All right. I'll collect it."

He went, and on his return I met him with eager hand — "My pen!"

"I'm sorry," he began.

"You did n't forget!" I exclaimed.

"No. But it was n't there."

"But — did you look?"

"Yes, I looked."

"Thoroughly?"

"Yes. I lit three matches."

"Matches! Then you did n't get it when you first got there!"

"Why — no — I had the dog to attend to — and — but I had plenty of time when I got back, and it *was n't* there."

"Well — Dear me! Did you look anywhere else? I suppose I may be mistaken. Perhaps I did take it back to the desk."

"That 's just what I thought myself," said Jonathan. "So I went there, and looked, and

then I looked on all the mantelpieces and your bureau. You must have put it in your bag the last minute — bet it's there now!"

"Bet it is n't."

It was n't. For two weeks more I was driven to using other pens — strange and distracting to the fingers and the eyes and the mind. Then Jonathan was to go up again.

"Please look once more," I begged, "and don't expect not to see it. I can fairly see it myself, this minute, standing up there on the right-hand side, just behind the machine oil can."

"Oh, I'll look," he promised. "If it's there, I'll find it."

He returned penless. I considered buying another. But we were planning to go up together the last week of the hunting season, and I thought I would wait on the chance.

We got off at the little station and hunted our way up, making great sweeps and jogs, as hunters must, to take in certain spots we thought promising — certain ravines and swamp edges where we are always sure of hearing the thunderous whir of partridge wings, or the soft, shrill whistle of woodcock.

At noon we broiled chops and rested in the lee of the wood edge, where, even in the late fall, one can usually find spots that are warm and still. It was dusk by the time we came over the crest of the farm ledges and saw the huddle of the home buildings below us, and quite dark when we reached the house. Fires had been made and coals smouldered on the hearth in the sitting-room.

"You light the lamp," I said, "and I'll just take a match and go through to see if that pen *should* happen to be there."

"No use doing anything to-night," said Jonathan. "To-morrow morning you can have a thorough hunt."

But I took my match, felt my way into the next room, past the fireplace, up to the cupboard, then struck my match. In its first flare-up I glanced in. Then I chuckled.

Jonathan had gone out to the dining-room, but he has perfectly good ears.

"NO!" he roared, and his tone of dismay, incredulity, rage, sent me off into gales of unscrupulous laughter. He was striding in, candle in hand, shouting, "It was *not there!*"

"Look yourself," I managed to gasp.

This time, somehow, he could see it.

"You planted it! You brought it up and planted it!"

"I never! Oh, dear me! It pays for going without it for weeks!"

"*Nothing* will ever make me believe that that pen was standing there when I looked for it!" said Jonathan, with vehement finality.

"All right," I sighed happily. "You don't have to believe it."

But in his heart perhaps he does believe it. At any rate, since that time he has adopted a new formula: "My dear, it may be there, of course, but I don't see it." And this position I regard as unassailable.

One triumph he has had. I wanted something that was stored away in the shut-up town house.

"Do you suppose you could find it?" I said, as gently as possible.

"I can try," he said.

"I think it is in a box about this shape — see? — a gray box, in the attic closet, the farthest-in corner."

"Are you sure it's in the house? If it's in the house, I think I can find it."

"Yes, I'm sure of that."

When he returned that night, his face wore a look of satisfaction very imperfectly concealed beneath a mask of nonchalance.

"*Good* for you! Was it where I said?"

"No."

"Was it in a different corner?"

"No."

"Where was it?"

"It was n't in a corner at all. It was n't in that closet."

"It was n't! Where, then?"

"Downstairs in the hall closet." He paused, then could not forbear adding, "And it was n't in a gray box; it was in a big hat-box with violets all over it."

"Why, *Jonathan!* Are n't you grand! How did you ever find it? I could n't have done better myself."

Under such praise he expanded. "The fact is," he said confidentially, "I had given it up. And then suddenly I changed my mind. I said to myself, 'Jonathan, don't be a man! Think what she'd do if she were here now.' And then I got busy and found it."

"Jonathan!" I could almost have wept if I had not been laughing.

"Well," he said, proud, yet rather sheepish, "what is there so funny about that? I gave up half a day to it."

"Funny! It is n't funny — exactly. You don't mind my laughing a little? Why, you've lived down the fountain pen — we'll forget the pen —"

"Oh, no, you won't forget the pen either," he said, with a certain pleasant grimness.

"Well, perhaps not — of course it would be a pity to forget that. Suppose I say, then, that we'll always regard the pen in the light of the violet hat-box?"

"I think that might do." Then he had an alarming afterthought. "But, see here — you won't expect me to do things like that often?"

"Dear me, no! People can't live always on their highest levels. Perhaps you'll *never* do it again." Jonathan looked distinctly relieved. "I'll accept it as a unique effort — like Dante's angel and Raphael's sonnet."

"Jonathan," I said that evening, "what do you know about St. Anthony of Padua?"

"Not much."

"Well, you ought to. He helped you to-day. He 's the saint who helps people to find lost articles. Every man ought to take him as a patron saint."

"And do you know which saint it is who helps people to find lost virtues — like humility, for instance?"

"No. I don't, really."

"I did n't suppose you did," said Jonathan.

II

Sap-Time

It was a little tree-toad that began it. In a careless moment he had come down to the bench that connects the big maple tree with the old locust stump, and when I went out at dusk to wait for Jonathan, there he sat, in plain sight. A few experimental pokes sent him back to the tree, and I studied him there, marveling at the way he assimilated with its bark. As Jonathan came across the grass I called softly, and pointed to the tree.

"Well?" he said.

"Don't you see?"

"No. What?"

"Look — I thought you had eyes!"

"Oh, what a little beauty!"

"And is n't his back just like bark and lichens! And what are those things in the tree beside him?"

"Plugs, I suppose."

"Plugs?"

"Yes. After tapping. Uncle Ben used to tap these trees, I believe."

"You mean for sap? Maple syrup?"

"Yes."

"Jonathan! I did n't know these were sugar maples."

"Oh, yes. These on the road."

"The whole row? Why, there are ten or fifteen of them! And you never told me!"

"I thought you knew."

"Knew! I don't know anything — I should think you'd know that, by this time. Do you suppose, if I had known, I should have let all these years go by — oh, dear — think of all the fun we've missed! And syrup!"

"You'd have to come up in February."

"Well, then, I'll *come* in February. Who's afraid of February?"

"All right. Try it next year."

I did. But not in February. Things happened, as things do, and it was early April before I got to the farm. But it had been a wintry March, and the farmers told me that the sap had not been running except for a few days in a February thaw. Anyway, it was worth trying.

Jonathan could not come with me. He was to join me later. But Hiram found a bundle of elder spouts in the attic, and with these and an auger we went out along the snowy, muddy road. The hole was bored — a pair of them — in the first tree, and the spouts driven in. I knelt, watching — in fact, peering up the spout-hole to see what might happen. Suddenly a drop, dim with sawdust, appeared — gathered, hesitated, then ran down gayly and leapt off the end.

"Look! Hiram! It's running!" I called.

Hiram, boring the next tree, made no response. He evidently expected it to run. Jonathan would have acted just like that, too, I felt sure. Is it a masculine quality, I wonder, to be unmoved when the theoretically expected becomes actual? Or is it that some temperaments have naturally a certain large confidence in the sway of law, and refuse to wonder at its individual workings? To me the individual workings give an ever fresh thrill because they bring a new realization of the mighty powers behind them. It seems to depend on which end you begin at.

But though the little drops thrilled me, I

was not beyond setting a pail underneath to catch them. And as Hiram went on boring, I followed with my pails. Pails, did I say? Pails by courtesy. There were, indeed, a few real pails — berry-pails, lard-pails, and water-pails — but for the most part the sap fell into pitchers, or tin saucepans, stew-kettles of aluminum or agate ware, blue and gray and white and mottled, or big yellow earthenware bowls. It was a strange collection of receptacles that lined the roadside when we had finished our progress. As I looked along the row, I laughed, and even Hiram smiled.

But what next? Every utensil in the house was out there, sitting in the road. There was nothing left but the wash-boiler. Now, I had heard tales of amateur syrup-boilings, and I felt that the wash-boiler would not do. Besides, I meant to work outdoors — no kitchen stove for me! I must have a pan, a big, flat pan. I flew to the telephone, and called up the village plumber, three miles away. Could he build me a pan? Oh, say, two feet by three feet, and five inches high — yes, right away. Yes, Hiram would call for it in the afternoon.

I felt better. And now for a fireplace! Oh,

Jonathan! Why did you have to be away! For Jonathan loves a stone and knows how to put stones together, as witness the stone "Eyrie" and the stile in the lane. However, there Jonathan was n't. So I went out into the swampy orchard behind the house and looked about — no lack of stones, at any rate. I began to collect material, and Hiram, seeing my purpose, helped with the big stones. Somehow my fireplace got made — two side walls, one end wall, the other end left open for stoking. It was not as pretty as if Jonathan had done it, but "'t was enough, 't would serve." I collected fire-wood, and there I was, ready for my pan, and the afternoon was yet young, and the sap was drip-drip-dripping from all the spouts. I could begin to boil next day. I felt that I was being borne along on the providential wave that so often floats the inexperienced to success.

That night I emptied all my vessels into the boiler and set them out once more. A neighbor drove by and pulled up to comment benevolently on my work.

"Will it run to-night?" I asked him.

"No — no — 't won't run to-night. Too

cold. 'T won't run any to-night. You can sleep all right."

This was pleasant to hear. There was a moon, to be sure, but it was growing colder, and at the idea of crawling along that road in the middle of the night even my enthusiasm shivered a little.

So I made my rounds at nine, in the white moonlight, and went to sleep.

I was awakened the next morning to a consciousness of flooding sunshine and Hiram's voice outside my window.

"Got anything I can empty sap into? I've got everything all filled up."

"Sap! Why, it is n't running yet, is it?"

"Pails were flowin' over when I came out."

"Flowing over! They said the sap would n't run last night."

"I guest there don't nobody know when sap'll run and when it won't," said Hiram peacefully, as he tramped off to the barn.

In a few minutes I was outdoors. Sure enough, Hiram had everything full — old boilers, feed-pails, water-pails. But we found some three-gallon milk-cans and used them. A farm is like a city. There are always things

enough in it for all purposes. It is only a question of using its resources.

Then, in the clear April sunshine, I went out and surveyed the row of maples. How they did drip! Some of them almost ran. I felt as if I had turned on the faucets of the universe and did n't know how to turn them off again.

However, there was my new pan. I set it over my oven walls and began to pour in sap. Hiram helped me. He seemed to think he needed his feed-pails. We poured in sap and we poured in sap. Never did I see anything hold so much as that pan. Even Hiram was stirred out of his usual calm to remark, "It beats all, how much that holds." Of course Jonathan would have had its capacity all calculated the day before, but my methods are empirical, and so I was surprised as well as pleased when all my receptacles emptied themselves into its shallow breadths and still there was a good inch to allow for boiling up. Yes, Providence — my exclusive little fool's Providence — was with me. The pan, and the oven, were a success, and when Jonathan came that night I led him out with uncon-

cealed pride and showed him the pan — now a heaving, frothing mass of sap-about-to-be-syrup, sending clouds of white steam down the wind. As he looked at the oven walls, I fancied his fingers ached to get at them, but he offered no criticism, seeing that they worked.

The next day began overcast, but Providence was merely preparing for me a special little gift in the form of a miniature snowstorm. It was quite real while it lasted. It whitened the grass and the road, it piled itself softly among the clusters of swelling buds on the apple trees, and made the orchard look as though it had burst into bloom in an hour. Then the sun came out, there were a few dazzling moments when the world was all blue and silver, and then the whiteness faded.

And the sap! How it dripped! Once an hour I had to make the rounds, bringing back gallons each time, and the fire under my pan was kept up so that the boiling down might keep pace with the new supply.

"They do say snow makes it run," shouted a passer-by, and another called, "You want to keep skimmin'!" Whereupon I seized my

long-handled skimmer and fell to work. Southern Connecticut does not know much about syrup, but by the avenue of the road I was gradually accumulating such wisdom as it possessed.

The syrup was made. No worse accident befell than the occasional overflowing of a pail too long neglected. The syrup was made, and bottled, and distributed to friends, and was the pride of the household through the year.

"This time I will go early," I said to Jonathan; "they say the late running is never quite so good."

It was early March when I got up there this time — early March after a winter whose rigor had known practically no break. Again Jonathan could not come, but Cousin Janet could, and we met at the little station, where Hiram was waiting with Kit and the surrey. The sun was warm, but the air was keen and the woods hardly showed spring at all yet, even in that first token of it, the slight thickening of their millions of little tips, through the swelling of the buds. The city trees al-

ready showed this, but the country ones still kept their wintry penciling of vanishing lines.

Spring was in the road, however. "There ain't no bottom to this road now, it's just dropped clean out," remarked a fellow teamster as we wallowed along companionably through the woods. But, somehow, we reached the farm. Again we bored our holes, and again I was thrilled as the first bright drops slipped out and jeweled the ends of the spouts. I watched Janet. She was interested but calm, classing herself at once with Hiram and Jonathan. We unearthed last year's oven and dug out its inner depths — leaves and dirt and apples and ashes — it was like excavating through the seven Troys to get to bottom. We brought down the big pan, now clothed in the honors of a season's use, and cleaned off the cobwebs incident to a year's sojourn in the attic. By sunset we had a panful of sap boiling merrily and already taking on a distinctly golden tinge. We tasted it. It was very syrupy. Letting the fire die down, we went in to get supper in the utmost content of spirit.

"It's so much simpler than last year," I

said, as we sat over our cozy "tea," — "having the pan and the oven ready-made, and all —"

"You don't suppose anything could happen to it while we're in here?" suggested Janet. "Shan't I just run out and see?"

"No, sit still. What could happen? The fire's going out."

"Yes, I know." But her voice was uncertain.

"You see, I've been all through it once," I reassured her.

As we rose, Janet said, "Let's go out before we do the dishes." And to humor her I agreed. We lighted the lantern and stepped out on the back porch. It was quite dark, and as we looked off toward the fireplace we saw gleams of red.

"How funny!" I murmured. "I did n't think there was so much fire left."

We felt our way over, through the yielding mud of the orchard, and as I raised the lantern we stared in dazed astonishment. The pan was a blackened mass, lit up by winking red eyes of fire. I held the lantern more closely. I seized a stick and poked — the crisp black

stuff broke and crumbled into an empty and blackening pan. A curious odor arose.

"It could n't have!" gasped Janet.

"It could n't — but it has!" I said.

It was a matter for tears, or rage, or laughter. And laughter won. When we recovered a little we took up the black shell of carbon that had once been syrup-froth; we laid it gently beside the oven, for a keepsake. Then we poured water in the pan, and steam rose hissing to the stars.

"Does it leak?" faltered Janet.

"Leak!" I said. I was on my knees now, watching the water stream through the parted seam of the pan bottom, down into the ashes below.

"The question is," I went on as I got up, "did it boil away because it leaked, or did it leak because it boiled away?"

"I don't see that it matters much," said Janet. She was showing symptoms of depression at this point.

"It matters a great deal," I said. "Because, you see, we've got to tell Jonathan, and it makes all the difference how we put it."

"I see," said Janet; then she added, experimentally, "Why tell Jonathan?"

"Why, Janet, you know better! I would n't miss telling Jonathan for anything. What is Jonathan *for!*"

"Well — of course," she conceded. "Let's do dishes."

We sat before the fire that evening and I read while Janet knitted. Between my eyes and the printed page there kept rising a vision — a vision of black crust, with winking red embers smoldering along its broken edges. I found it distracting in the extreme. . . .

At some time unknown, out of the blind depths of the night, I was awakened by a voice: —

"It's beginning to rain. I think I'll just go out and empty what's near the house."

"Janet!" I murmured, "don't be absurd."

"But it will dilute all that sap."

"There is n't any sap to dilute. It won't be running at night." After a while the voice, full of propitiatory intonations, resumed: —

"My dear, you don't mind if I slip out. It will only take a minute."

"I do mind. Go to sleep!"

Silence. Then:—

"It's raining harder. I hate to think of all that sap—"

"You don't *have* to think!" I was quite savage. "Just go to sleep — and let me!" Another silence. Then a fresh downpour. The voice was pleading:—

"*Please* let me go! I'll be back in a minute. And it's not cold."

"Oh, well — I'm awake now, anyway. *I'll* go." My voice was tinged with that high resignation that is worse than anger. Janet's tone changed instantly:—

"No, no! Don't! Please don't! I'm going. I truly don't mind."

"*I'm* going. I don't mind, either, not at all."

"Oh, dear! Then let's not either of us go."

"That was my idea in the first place."

"Well, then, we won't. Go to sleep, and I will too."

"Not at all! I've decided to go."

"But it's stopped raining. Probably it won't rain any more."

"Then what are you making all this fuss for?"

"I did n't make a fuss. I just thought I could slip out —"

"Well, you could n't. And it's raining very hard again. And I'm going."

"Oh, don't! You'll get drenched."

"Of course. But I can't bear to have all that sap diluted."

"It does n't run at night. You said it did n't."

"You said it did."

"But I don't really know. You know best."

"Why did n't you think of that sooner? Anyway, I'm going."

"Oh, dear! You make me feel as if I'd stirred you up —"

"You have," I interrupted, sweetly. "I won't deny that you *have* stirred me up. But now that you have mentioned it" — I felt for a match — "now that you have mentioned it, I see that this was the one thing needed to make my evening complete, or perhaps it's morning — I don't know."

We found the dining-room warm, and soon we were equipped in those curious compromises of vesture that people adopt under such circumstances, and, with lantern and um-

brella, we fumbled our way out to the trees. The rain was driving in sheets, and we plodded up the road in the yellow circle of lantern-light wavering uncertainly over the puddles, while under our feet the mud gave and sucked.

"It's diluted, sure enough," I said, as we emptied the pails. We crawled slowly back, with our heavy milk-can full of sap-and-rain-water, and went in.

The warm dining-room was pleasant to return to, and we sat down to cookies and milk, feeling almost cozy.

"I've always wanted to know how it would be to go out in the middle of the night this way," I remarked, "and now I know."

"Are n't you hateful!" said Janet.

"Not at all. Just appreciative. But now, if you have n't any *other* plan, we'll go back to bed."

It was half-past eight when we waked next morning. But there was nothing to wake up for. The old house was filled with the rain-noises that only such an old house knows. On the little windows the drops pricked sharply; in the fireplace with the straight flue

they fell, hissing, on the embers. On the porch roofs the rain made a dull patter of sound; on the tin roof of the "little attic" over the kitchen it beat with flat resonance. In the big attic, when we went up to see if all was tight, it filled the place with a multitudinous clamor; on the sides of the house it drove with a fury that re-echoed dimly within doors.

Outside, everything was afloat. We visited the trees and viewed with consternation the torrents of rain-water pouring into the pails. We tried fastening pans over the spouts to protect them. The wind blew them merrily down the road. It would have been easy enough to cover the pails, but how to let the sap drip in and the rain drip out — that was the question.

"It seems as if there was a curse on the syrup this year," said Janet.

"The trouble is," I said, "I know just enough to have lost my hold on the fool's Providence, and not enough really to take care of myself."

"Superstition!" said Janet.

"What do you call your idea of the curse?" I retorted. "Anyway, I have an idea! Look,

Janet! We'll just cut up these enamel-cloth table-covers here by the sink and everywhere, and tack them around the spouts."

Janet's thrifty spirit was doubtful. "Don't you need them?"

"Not half so much as the trees do. Come on! Pull them off. We'll have to have fresh ones this summer, anyway."

We stripped the kitchen tables and the pantry and the milk-room. We got tacks and a hammer and scissors, and out we went again. We cut a piece for each tree, just enough to go over each pair of spouts and protect the pail. When tacked on, it had the appearance of a neat bib, and as the pattern was a blue and white check, the effect, as one looked down the road at the twelve trees, was very fresh and pleasing. It seemed to cheer the people who drove by, too.

But the bibs served their purpose, and the sap dripped cozily into the pails without any distraction from alien elements. Sap doesn't run in the rain, they say, but this sap did. Probably Hiram was right, and you can't tell. I am glad if you can't. The physical mysteries of the universe are being unveiled so

swiftly that one likes to find something that still keeps its secret — though, indeed, the spiritual mysteries seem in no danger of such enforcement.

The next day the rain stopped, the floods began to subside, and Jonathan managed to arrive, though the roads had even less "bottom to 'em" than before. The sun blazed out, and the sap ran faster, and, after Jonathan had fully enjoyed them, the blue and white bibs were taken off. Somehow in the clear March sunshine they looked almost shocking. By the next day we had syrup enough to try for sugar.

For on sugar my heart was set. Syrup was all very well for the first year, but now it had to be sugar. Moreover, as I explained to Janet, when it came to sugar, being absolutely ignorant, I was again in a position to expect the aid of the fool's Providence.

"How much *do* you know about it?" asked Janet.

"Oh, just what people say. It seems to be partly like fudge and partly like molasses candy. You boil it, and then you beat it, and then you pour it off."

"I've got more to go on than that," said Jonathan. "I came up on the train with the Judge. He used to see it done."

"You've got to drive Janet over to her train to-night; Hiram can't," I said.

"All right. There 's time enough."

We sat down to early supper, and took turns running out to the kitchen to "try" the syrup as it boiled down. At least we said we would take turns, but usually we all three went. Supper seemed distinctly a side issue.

"I'm going to take it off now," said Jonathan. "Look out!"

"Do you think it's time?" I demurred.

"We 'll know soon," said Jonathan, with his usual composure.

We hung over him. "Now you beat it," I said. But he was already beating.

"Get some cold water to set it in," he commanded. We brought the dishpan with water from the well, where ice still floated.

"Maybe you ought n't to stir so much — do you think?" I suggested, helpfully. "Beat it more — up, you know."

"More the way you would eggs," said Janet.

"I'll show you." I lunged at the spoon.

"Go away! This is n't eggs," said Jonathan, beating steadily.

"Your arm must be tired. Let me take it," pleaded Janet.

"No, me!" I said. "Janet, you've got to get your coat and things. You'll have to start in fifteen minutes. Here, Jonathan, you need a fresh arm."

"I'm fresh enough."

"And I really don't think you have the motion."

"I have motion enough. This is my job. You go and help Janet."

"Janet 's all right."

"So am I. See how white it 's getting. The Judge said —"

"Here come Hiram and Kit," announced Janet, returning with bag and wraps. "But you have ten minutes. Can't I help?"

"He won't let us. He's that 'sot,'" I murmured. "He 'll make you miss your train."

"You *could* butter the pans," he countercharged, "and you have n't."

We flew to prepare, and the pouring began.

It was a thrilling moment. The syrup, or sugar, now a pale hay color, poured out thickly, blob-blob-blob, into the little pans. Janet moved them up as they were needed, and I snatched the spoon, at last, and encouraged the stuff to fall where it should. But Jonathan got it from me again, and scraped out the remnant, making designs of clovers and polliwogs on the tops of the cakes. Then a dash for coats and hats and a rush to the carriage.

When the surrey disappeared around the turn of the road, I went back, shivering, to the house. It seemed very empty, as houses will, being sensitive things. I went to the kitchen. There on the table sat a huddle of little pans, to cheer me, and I fell to work getting things in order to be left in the morning. Then I went back to the fire and waited for Jonathan. I picked up a book and tried to read, but the stillness of the house was too importunate, it had to be listened to. I leaned back and watched the fire, and the old house and I held communion together.

Perhaps in no other way is it possible to get quite what I got that evening. It was partly

my own attitude; I was going away in the morning, and I had, in a sense, no duties toward the place. The magazines of last fall lay on the tables, the newspapers of last fall lay beside them. The dust of last fall was, doubtless, in the closets and on the floors. It did not matter. For though I was the mistress of the house, I was for the moment even more its guest, and guests do not concern themselves with such things as these.

If it had been really an empty house, I should have been obliged to think of these things, for in an empty house the dust speaks and the house is still, dumbly imprisoned in its own past. On the other hand, when a house is filled with life, it is still, too; it is absorbed in its own present. But when one sojourns in a house that is merely resting, full of the life that has only for a brief season left it, ready for the life that is soon to return — then one is in the midst of silences that are not empty and hollow, but richly eloquent. The house is the link that joins and interprets the living past and the living future.

Something of this I came to feel as I sat there in the wonderful stillness. There were

no house noises such as generally form the unnoticed background of one's consciousness — the steps overhead, the distant voices, the ticking of the clock, the breathing of the dog in the corner. Even the mice and the chimney-swallows had not come back, and I missed the scurrying in the walls and the flutter of wings in the chimney. The fire purred low, now and then the wind sighed gently about the corner of the "new part," and a loose door-latch clicked as the draught shook it. A branch drew back and forth across a window-pane with the faintest squeak. And little by little the old house opened its heart. All that it told me I hardly yet know myself. It gathered up for me all its past, the past that I had known and the past that I had not known. Time fell away. My own importance dwindled. I seemed a very small part of the life of the house — very small, yet wholly belonging to it. I felt that it absorbed me as it absorbed the rest — those before and after me — for time was not.

There was the sound of slow wheels outside, the long roll of the carriage-house door, and the trampling of hoofs on the flooring

within. Then the clinking of the lantern and the even tread of feet on the path behind the house, a gust of raw snow-air — and the house fell silent so that Jonathan might come in.

"Your sugar is hardening nicely, I see," he said, rubbing his hands before the fire.

"Yes," I said. "You know I *told* Janet that for this part of the affair we could trust to the fool's Providence."

"Thank you," said Jonathan.

III

Evenings on the Farm

I 'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I 'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may);
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

I 'm going out to fetch the little calf
That 's standing by the mother. It 's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

ROBERT FROST.

WHEN we first planned to take up the farm we looked forward with especial pleasure to our evenings. They were to be the quiet rounding-in of our days, full of companionship, full of meditation. "We'll do lots of reading aloud," I said. "And we'll have long walks. There won't be much to do *but* walk and read. I can hardly wait." And I chose our summer books with special reference to reading aloud.

"Of course," I said, as we fell to work at our packing, "we'll have to do all sorts of things first. But the days are so long up there, and the life is very simple. And in the even-

ings you'll help. We ought to be settled in a week."

"Or two — or three," suggested Jonathan.

"Three! What is there to do?"

"Farm-life is n't so blamed simple as you think."

"But what *is* there to do? Now, listen! One day for trunks, one day for boxes and barrels, one day for closets, that's three, one for curtains, four, one day for — for the garret, that 's five. Well — one day for odds and ends that I have n't thought of. That 's liberal, I'm sure."

"Better say the rest of your life for the odds and ends you have n't thought of," said Jonathan, as he drove the last nail in a neatly headed barrel.

"Jonathan, why are you such a pessimist?"

"I'm not, except when you're such an optimist."

"If I'd begun by saying it would take a month, would you have said a week?"

"Can't tell. Might have."

"Anyway, there 's nothing bad about odds and ends. They're about all women have much to do with most of their lives."

"That's what I said. And you called me a pessimist."

"I did n't call you one. I said, why were you one."

"I'm sorry. My mistake," said Jonathan with the smile of one who scores.

And so we went.

One day for trunks was all right. Any one can manage trunks. And the second day, the boxes were emptied and sent flying out to the barn. Curtains I decided to keep for evening work, while Jonathan read. That left the closets and the attic, or rather the attics, for there was one over the main house and one over the "new part," — still "new," although now some seventy years old. They were known as the attic and the little attic. I thought I would do the closets first, and I began with the one in the parlor. This was built into the chimney, over the fireplace. It was low, and as long as the mantelpiece itself. It had two long shelves shut away behind three glass doors through which the treasures within were dimly visible. When I swung these open it felt like opening a tomb — cold, musty

air hung about my face. I brushed it aside, and considered where to begin. It was a depressing collection. There were photographs and photographs, some in frames, the rest of them tied up in packages or lying in piles. A few had names or messages written on the back, but most gave no clue; and all of them gazed out at me with that expression of complete respectability that constitutes so impenetrable a mask for the personality behind. Most of us wear such masks, but the older photographers seem to have been singularly successful in concentrating attention on them. Then there were albums, with more photographs, of people and of "views." There was a big Bible, some prayer-books, and a few other books elaborately bound with that heavy fancifulness that we are learning to call Victorian. One of these was on "The Wonders of the Great West"; another was about "The Female Saints of America." I took it down and glanced through it, but concluded that one had to be a female saint, or at least an aspirant, to appreciate it. Then there were things made out of dried flowers, out of hair, out of shells, out of pine-cones. There were

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vases and other ornamental bits of china and glass, also Victorian, looking as if they were meant to be continually washed or dusted by the worn, busy fingers of the female saints. As I came to fuller realization of all these relics, my resolution flickered out and there fell upon me a strange numbness of spirit. I seemed under a spell of inaction. Everything behind those glass doors had been cherished too long to be lightly thrown away, yet was not old enough to be valuable nor useful enough to keep. I spent a long day — one of the longest days of my life — browsing through the books, trying to sort the photographs, and glancing through a few old letters. I did nothing in particular with anything, and in the late afternoon I roused myself, put them all back, and shut the glass doors. I had nothing to show for my day's experience except a deep little round ache in the back of my neck and a faint brassy taste in my mouth. I complained of it to Jonathan later.

"It always tasted just that way to me when I was a boy," he said, "but I never thought much about it — I thought it was just a closet-taste."

"And it is n't only the taste," I went on. "It does something to me, to my state of mind. I'm afraid to try the garret."

"Garrets are different," said Jonathan. "But I'd leave them. They can wait."

"They've waited a good while, of course," I said.

And so we left the garrets. We came back to them later, and were glad we had done so. But that is a story by itself.

Meanwhile, in the evenings, Jonathan helped.

"I'm afraid you were more or less right about the odd jobs," I admitted one night. "They do seem to accumulate." I was holding a candle while he set up a loose latch.

"They've been accumulating a good many years," said Jonathan.

"Yes, that's it. And so the doors all stick, and the latches won't latch, and the shades are sulky or wild, and the pantry shelves — have you noticed? — they're all warped so they rock when you set a dish on them."

"And the chairs pull apart," added Jonathan.

"Yes. Of course after we catch up we'll be all right."

"I would n't count too much on catching up."

"Why not?" I asked.

"The farm has had a long start."

"But you're a Yankee," I argued; "the Yankee nature fairly feeds on such jobs — 'putter jobs,' you know."

"Yes, I know."

"Only, of course, you get on faster if you 're not too particular about having the exact tool —"

Considered as a Yankee, Jonathan's only fault is that when he does a job he likes to have a very special tool to do it with. Often it is so special that I have never heard its name before and then I consider he is going too far. He merely thinks I have n't gone far enough. Perhaps such matters must always remain matters of opinion. But even with this handicap we did begin to catch up, and we could have done this a good deal faster if it had not been for the pump.

The pump was a clear case of new wine in an old bottle. It was large and very strong.

The people who worked it were strong too. But the walls and floor to which it was attached were not strong at all. And so, one night, when Jonathan wanted a walk I was obliged instead to suggest the pump.

"What's the matter there?"

"Why, it seems to have pulled clear of its moorings. You look at it."

He looked, with that expression of meditative resourcefulness peculiar to the true Yankee countenance. "H'm — needs new wood there, — and there; that stuff'll never hold." And so the old bottle was patched with new skin at the points of strain, and in the zest of reconstruction Jonathan almost forgot to regret the walk. "We'll have it to-morrow night," he said: "the moon will be better."

The next evening I met him below the turn of the road. "Wonderful night it's going to be," he said, as he pushed his wheel up the last hill.

"Yes — " I said, a little uneasily. I was thinking of the kitchen pump. Finally I brought myself to face it.

"There seems to be some trouble — with the pump," I said apologetically. I felt that it was my fault, though I knew it was n't.

"More trouble? What sort of trouble?"

"Oh, it wheezes and makes funny sucking noises, and the water spits and spits, and then bursts out, and then does n't come at all. It sounds a little like a cat with a bone in its throat."

"Probably just that," said Jonathan: "grain of sand in the valve, very likely."

"Shall I get a plumber?"

"Plumber! I'll fix it myself in three shakes of a lamb's tail."

"Well," I said, relieved: "you can do that after supper while I see that all the chickens are in, and those turkeys, and then we'll have our walk."

Accordingly I went off on my tour. When I returned the pale moon-shadows were already beginning to show in the lingering dusk of the fading daylight. Indoors seemed very dark, but on the kitchen floor a candle sat, flaring and dipping.

"Jonathan," I called, "I'm ready."

"Well, I'm not," said a voice at my feet.

"Why, where are you? Oh, there!" I bent down and peered under the sink at a shape crouched there. "Have n't you finished?"

"Finished! I've just got the thing apart."

"I should say you had!" I regarded the various pieces of iron and leather and wood as they lay, mere dismembered shapes, about the dim kitchen.

"It does n't seem as if it would ever come together again — to be a pump," I said in some depression.

"Oh, that's easy! It's just a question of time."

"How much time?"

"Heaven knows."

"Was it the valve?"

"It was — several things."

His tone had the vagueness born of concentration. I could see that this was no time to press for information. Besides, in the field of mechanics, as Jonathan has occasionally pointed out to me, I am rather like a traveler who has learned to ask questions in a foreign tongue, but not to understand the answers.

"Well, I'll bring my sewing out here — or would you rather have me read to you? There's something in the last number of —"

"No — get your sewing — blast that screw! Why does n't it start?"

Evidently sewing was better than the last number of anything. I settled myself under a lamp, while Jonathan, in the twilight beneath the sink, continued his mystic rites, with an accompaniment of mildly vituperative or persuasive language, addressed sometimes to his tools, sometimes to the screws and nuts and other parts, sometimes against the men who made them or the plumbers who put them in. Now and then I held a candle, or steadied some perverse bit of metal while he worked his will upon it. And at last the phœnix did indeed rise, the pump was again a pump, — at least it looked like one.

"Suppose it does n't work," I suggested.

"Suppose it does," said Jonathan.

He began to pump furiously. "Pour in water there!" he directed. "Keep on pouring —don't stop—never mind if she does spout." I poured and he pumped, and there were the usual sounds of a pump resuming activity: gurglings and spittings, suckings and sudden spoutings; but at last it seemed to get its breath — a few more long strokes of the handle, and the water poured.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Oh, fairly late — about ten — ten minutes past."

Instead of our walk, we stood for a moment under the big maples before the house and looked out into a sea of moonlight. It silvered the sides of the old gray barns and washed over the blossoming apple trees beyond the house. Is there anything more sweetly still than the stillness of moonlight over apple blossoms! As we went out to the barns to lock up, even the little hencoops looked poetic. Passing one of them, we half roused the feathered family within and heard muffled peepings and a smothered *clk-clk*. Jonathan was by this time so serene that I felt I could ask him a question that had occurred to me.

"Jonathan, how long *is* three shakes of a lamb's tail?"

"Apparently, my dear, it is the whole evening," he answered unruffled.

The next night was drizzly. Well, we would have books instead of a walk. We lighted a fire, May though it was, and settled down before it. "What shall we read?" I asked, feeling very cozy.

Jonathan was filling his pipe with a leisurely deliberation good to look upon. With the match in his hand he paused — "Oh, I meant to tell you — those young turkeys of yours — they were still out when I came through the yard. I wonder if they went in all right."

I have always noticed that if the turkeys grow up very fat and strutty and suggestive of Thanksgiving, Jonathan calls them "our turkeys," but in the spring, when they are committing all the naughtinesses of wild and silly youth, he is apt to allude to them as "those young turkeys of yours."

I rose wearily. "No. They never go in all right when they get out at this time — especially on wet nights. I'll have to find them and stow them."

Jonathan got up, too, and laid down his pipe. "You'll need the lantern," he said.

We went out together into the May drizzle — a good thing to be out in, too, if you are out for the fun of it. But when you are hunting silly little turkeys who literally don't know enough to go in when it rains, and when you expected and wanted to be doing something else, then it seems different, the drizzle

seems peculiarly drizzly, the silliness of the turkeys seems particularly and unendurably silly.

We waded through the drenched grass and the tall, dripping weeds, listening for the faint, foolish peeping of the wanderers. Some we found under piled fence rails, some under burdock leaves, some under nothing more protective than a plantain leaf. By ones and twos we collected them, half drowned yet shrilly remonstrant, and dropped them into the dry shed where they belonged. Then we returned to the house, very wet, feeling the kind of discouragement that usually besets those who are forced to furnish prudence to fools.

"Nine o'clock," said Jonathan, "and we 're too wet to sit down. If you could just shut in those turkeys on wet days —"

"Shut them in! Did n't I shut them in! They must have got out since four o'clock."

"Is n't the shed tight?" he asked.

"Chicken-tight, but not turkey-tight, apparently. Nothing is turkey-tight."

"They 're bigger than chickens."

"Not in any one spot they are n't. They 're

like coiled wire — when they stretch out to get through a crack they have *no* dimension except length, their bodies are mere imaginary points to hang feathers on. You don't know little turkeys."

It might be said that, having undertaken to raise turkeys, we had to expect them to act like turkeys. But there were other interruptions in our evenings where our share of responsibility was not so plain. For example, one wet evening in early June we had kindled a little fire and I had brought the lamp forward. The pump was quiescent, the little turkeys were all tucked up in the turkey equivalent for bed, the farm seemed to be cuddling down into itself for the night. We sat for a moment luxuriously regarding the flames, listening to the sighing of the wind, feeling the sweet damp air as it blew in through the open windows. I was considering which book it should be and at last rose to possess myself of two or three.

"Sh—h—h!" said Jonathan, a warning finger raised.

I stood listening.

"I don't hear anything," I said.

"Sh—h!" he repeated. "There!"

This time, indeed, I heard faint bird-notes.

"Young robins!" He sprang up and made for the back door with long strides.

I peered out through the window of the orchard room, but saw only the reflection of the firelight and the lamp. Suddenly I heard Jonathan whistle and I ran to the back porch. Blackness pressed against my eyes.

"Where are you?" I called into it.

The whistle again, quite near me, apparently out of the air.

"Bring a lantern," came a whisper.

I got it and came back and down the steps to the path, holding up my light and peering about in search of the voice.

"Where are you? I can't see you at all."

"Right here — look — here — up!" The voice was almost over my head.

I searched the dark masses of the tree — oh, yes! the lantern revealed the heel of a shoe in a crotch, and above, — yes, undoubtedly, the rest of Jonathan, stretched out along a limb.

"Oh! What are you doing up there?"

"Get me a long stick — hoe — clothes-

pole — anything I can poke with. Quick! The cat 's up here. I can hear her, but I can't see her."

I found the rake and reached it up to him. From the dark beyond him came a distressed mew.

"Now the lantern. Hang it on the teeth." He drew it up to him, then, rake in one hand and lantern in the other, proceeded to squirm out along the limb.

"Now I see her."

I saw her too — a huddle of yellow, crouched close.

"I'll have her in a minute. She'll either have to drop or be caught."

And in fact this distressing dilemma was already becoming plain to the marauder herself. Her mewings grew louder and more frequent. A few more contortions brought the climber nearer his victim. A little judicious urging with the rake and she was within reach. The rake came down to me, and a long, wild mew announced that Jonathan had clutched.

"I don't see how you 're going to get down," I said, mopping the rain-mist out of my eyes.

"Watch me," panted the contortionist.

I watched a curious mass descend the tree, the lantern, swinging and jerking, fitfully illumined the pair, and I could see, now a knee and an ear, now a hand and a yellow furry shape, now a white collar, nose, and chin. There was a last, long, scratching slide. I snatched the lantern, and Jonathan stood beside me, holding by the scruff of her neck a very much frazzled yellow cat. We returned to the porch where her victims were — one alive, in a basket, two dead, beside it, and Jonathan, kneeling, held the cat's nose close to the little bodies while he boxed her ears — once, twice; remonstrant mews rose wild, and with a desperate twist the culprit backed out under his arm and leaped into the blackness.

"Don't believe she 'll eat young robin for a day or two," said Jonathan.

"Is that what they were? Where were they?"

"Under the tree. She 'd knocked them out."

"Could you put this one back? He seems all right — only sort of naked in spots."

"We 'll half cover the basket and hang it in the tree. His folks 'll take care of him."

Next morning early there began the greatest to-do among the robins in the orchard. They shrieked their comments on the affair at the top of their lungs. They screamed abusively at Jonathan and me as we stood watching. "They say we did it!" said Jonathan. "I call that gratitude!"

I wish I could record that from that evening the cat was a reformed character. An impression had indeed been made. All next day she stayed under the porch, two glowing eyes in the dark. The second day she came out, walking indifferent and debonair, as cats do. But when Jonathan took down the basket from the tree and made her smell of it, she flattened her ears against her head and shot under the porch again.

But lessons grow dim and temptation is freshly importunate. It was not two weeks before Jonathan was up another tree on the same errand, and when I considered the number of nests in our orchard, and the number of cats — none of them really our cats — on the place, I felt that the position of overruling

Providence was almost more than we could undertake, if we hoped to do anything else.

These things — tinkering of latches and chairs, pump-mending, rescue work in the orchard and among the poultry — filled our evenings fairly full. Yet these are only samples, and not particularly representative samples either. They were the sort of things that happened oftenest, the common emergencies incidental to the life. But there were also the uncommon emergencies, each occurring seldom but each adding its own touch of variety to the tale of our evenings.

For instance, there was the time of the great drought, when Jonathan, coming in from a tour of the farm at dusk, said, "I've got to go up and dig out the spring-hole across the swamp. Everything else is dry, and the cattle are getting crazy."

"Can I help?" I asked, not without regrets for our books and our evening — it was a black night, and I had had hopes.

"Yes. Come and hold the lantern."

We went. The spring-hole had been trodden by the poor, eager creatures into a use-

less jelly of mud. Jonathan fell to work, while I held the lantern high. But soon it became more than a mere matter of holding the lantern. There was a crashing in the blackness about us and a huge horned head emerged behind my shoulder, another loomed beyond Jonathan's stooping bulk.

"Keep 'em back," he said. "They'll have it all trodden up again — Hi! You! Ge' back 'ere!" There is as special a lingo for talking to cattle as there is for talking to babies. I used it as well as I could. I swung the lantern in their faces, I brandished the hoe-handle at them, I jabbed at them recklessly. They snorted and backed and closed in again, — crazy, poor things, with the smell of the water. It was an evening's battle for us. Jonathan dug and dug, and then laid rails, and the precious water filled in slowly, grew to a dark pool, and the thirsty creatures panted and snuffed in the dark just outside the radius of the hoe-handle, until at last we could let them in. I had forgotten my books, for we had come close to the earth and the creatures of the earth. The cows were our sisters and the steers our brothers that night.

Sometimes the emergency was in the barn — a broken halter and trouble among the horses, or perhaps a new calf. Sometimes a stray creature, — cow or horse, — grazing along the roadside, got into our yard and threatened our corn and squashes and my poor, struggling flower-beds. Once it was a break in the wire fence around Jonathan's muskmelon patch in the barn meadow. The cows had just been turned in, and if it was n't mended that evening it meant no melons that season, also melon-tainted cream for days.

Once or twice each year it was the drain-pipe from the sink. The drain, like the pump, was an innovation. Our ancestors had always carried out whatever they could n't use or burn, and dumped it on the far edge of the orchard. In a thinly settled community, there is much to be said for this method: you know just where you are. But we had the drain, and occasionally we did n't know just where we were.

"Coffee grounds," Jonathan would suggest, with a touch of sternness.

"No," I would reply firmly; "coffee grounds are always burned."

"What then?"

"Don't know. I've poked and poked."

A gleam in the corner of Jonathan's eye — "What with?"

"Oh, everything."

"Yes, I suppose so. For instance what?"

"Why — hair-pin first, of course, and then scissors, and then button-hook — you need n't smile. Button-hooks are wonderful for cleaning out pipes. And then I took a pail-handle and straightened it out —" Jonathan was laughing by this time — "Well, I have to use what I have, don't I?"

"Yes, of course. And after the pail-handle?"

"After that — oh, yes. I tried your cleaning-rod."

"The devil you did!"

"Not at all. It was n't hurt a bit. It just would n't go down, that's all. So then I thought I'd wait for you."

"And now what do you expect?"

"I expect you to fix it."

Of course, after that, there was nothing for Jonathan to do but fix it. Usually it did not take long. Sometimes it did. Once it took a

whole evening, and required the services of a young tree, which Jonathan went out and cut and trimmed and forced through a section of the pipe which he had taken up and laid out for the operation on the kitchen floor. It was a warm evening, too, and friends had driven over to visit us. We received them warmly in the kitchen. We explained that we believed in making them members of the family, and that members of the family always helped in whatever was being done. So they helped. They took turns gripping the pipe while Jonathan and I persuaded the young tree through it. It required great strength and some skill because it was necessary to make the tree and the pipe perform spirally rotatory movements each antagonistic and complementary to the other. We were all rather tired and very hot before anything began to happen. Then it happened all at once: the tree burst through — and not alone. A good deal came with it. The kitchen floor was a sight, and there was — undoubtedly there was — a strong smell of coffee. Jonathan smiled. Then he went down cellar and restored the pipe to its position, while the rest

of us cleared up the kitchen,— it's astonishing what a little job like that can make a kitchen look like,—and as our friends started to go a voice from beneath us, like the ghost in "Hamlet," shouted, "Hold 'em! There's half a freezer of ice-cream down here we can finish." Sure enough there was! And then he would n't have to pack it down. We had it up. We looted the pantry as only irresponsible adults can loot, in their own pantry, and the evening ended in luxurious ease. Some time in the black of the night our friends left, and I suppose the sound of their carriage-wheels along the empty road set many a neighbor wondering, through his sleep, "Who's sick now?" How could they know it was only a plumbing party?

As I look back on this evening it seems one of the pleasantest of the year. It is n't so much what you do, of course, as the way you feel about it, that makes the difference between pleasant and unpleasant. Shall we say of that evening that we meant to read aloud? Or that we meant to have a quiet evening with friends? Not at all. We say, with all the conviction in the world, that we meant, on

that particular evening, to have a plumbing party, with the drain as the *pièce de résistance*. Toward this our lives had been yearning, and lo! they had arrived!

Some few things, however, are hard to meet in that spirit. When the pigs broke out of the pen, about nine o'clock, and Hiram was away, and Mrs. Hiram needed our help to get them in — there was no use in pretending that we meant to do it. Moreover, the labor of rounding up pigs is one of mingled arduousness and delicacy. Pigs in clover was once a popular game, but pigs in a dark orchard is not a game at all, and it will, I am firmly convinced, never be popular. It is, I repeat, not a game, yet probably the only way to keep one's temper at all is to regard it, for the time being, as a major sport, like football and deep-sea fishing and mountain-climbing, where you are expected to take some risks and not think too much about results as such. On this basis it has, perhaps, its own rewards. But the attitude is difficult to maintain, especially late at night.

On that particular evening, as we returned, breathless and worn, to the house, I could

not refrain from saying, with some edge, "I never wanted to keep pigs anyway."

"Who says we're keeping them?" remarked Jonathan; and then we laughed and laughed.

"You need n't think I'm laughing because you said anything specially funny," I said. "It's only because I'm tired enough to laugh at anything."

The pump, too, tried my philosophy now and then. One evening when I had worn my hands to the bone cutting out thick leather washers for Jonathan to insert somewhere in the circulatory system of that same monster, I finally broke out, "Oh, dear! I hate the pump! I wanted a moonlight walk!"

"I'll have the thing together now in a jiffy," said Jonathan.

"Jiffy! There's no use talking about jiffies at half-past ten at night," I snarled. I was determined anyway to be as cross as I liked. "Why can't we find a really simple way of living? This is n't simple. It's highly complex and very difficult."

"You cut those washers very well," suggested Jonathan soothingly, but I was not prepared to be soothed.

"It was hateful work, though. Now, look what we've done this evening! We've shut up a setting hen, and housed the little turkeys, and driven that cow back into the road, and mended a window-shade and the dog's chain, and now we've fixed the pump — and it won't stay fixed at that!"

"Fair evening's work," murmured Jonathan as he rapidly assembled the pump.

"Yes, as work. But all I mean is — it is n't *simple*. Farm life has a reputation for simplicity that I begin to think is overdone. It does n't seem to me that my evening has been any more simple than if we had dressed for dinner and gone to the opera or played bridge. In fact, at this distance, that, compared with this, has the simplicity of a — I don't know what!"

"I like your climaxes," said Jonathan, and we both laughed. "There! I'm done. Now suppose we go, in our simple way, and lock up the barns and chicken-houses."

And so the evenings came and went, each offering a prospect of fair and quiet things — books and firelight and moonlight and talk;

many in retrospect full of things quite different—drains and latches and fledglings and cows and pigs. Many, but not all. For the evenings did now and then come when the pump ceased from troubling and the "critters" were at rest. Evenings when we sat under the lamp and read, when we walked and walked along moonlit roads or lay on the slopes of moon-washed meadows. It was on such an evening that we faced the vagaries of farm life and searched for a philosophy to cover them.

"I'm beginning to see that it will never be any better," I said.

"Probably not," said Jonathan, talking around his pipe.

"You seem contented enough about it."

"I am."

"I don't know that I'm contented, but perhaps I'm resigned. I believe it's necessary."

"Of course it's necessary."

Jonathan often has the air of having known since infancy the great truths about life that I have just discovered. I overlooked this, and went on, "You see, we're right down close to

the earth that is the ultimate basis of everything, and all the caprices of things touch us immediately and we have to make immediate adjustments to them."

"And that knocks the bottom out of our evenings."

"Now if we're in the city, playing bridge, somebody else is making those adjustments for us. We're like the princess with seventeen mattresses between her and the pea."

"She felt it, though," said Jonathan. "It kept her awake."

"I know. She had a poor night. But even she would hardly have maintained that she felt it as she would have done if the mattresses had n't been there."

"True," said Jonathan.

"Farm life is the pea without the mattresses —" I went on.

"Sounds a little cheerless," said Jonathan.

"Well — of course, it is n't really cheerless at all. But neither is it easy. It's full of remorseless demands for immediate adjustment."

"That was the way the princess felt about her pea."

"The princess was a snippy little thing. But after all, probably her life was full of adjustments of other sorts. She could n't call her soul her own a minute, I suppose."

"Perhaps that was why she ran away," suggested Jonathan.

"Of course it was. She ran away to find the simple life and did n't find it."

"No. She found the pea — even with all those mattresses."

"And we've run away, and found several peas, and fewer mattresses," said Jonathan.

"Let's not get confused —"

"I'm not confused," said Jonathan.

"Well, I shall be in a minute if I don't look out. You can't follow a parallel too far. What I mean is, that if you run away from one kind of complexity you run into another kind."

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to like it all," I answered, "and make believe I meant to do it."

After that we were silent awhile. Then I tried again. "You know your trick of waltzing with a glass of water on your head?"

"Yes."

"Well, I wonder if we could n't do that with our souls."

"That suggests to me a rather curious picture," said Jonathan.

"Well — you know what I mean. When you do that, your body takes up all the jolts and jiggles before they get to the top of your head, so the glass stays quiet."

"Well —"

"Well, I don't see why — only, of course, our souls are n't really anything like glasses of water, and it would be perfectly detestable to think of carrying them around carefully like that."

"Perhaps you'd better back out of that figure of speech," suggested Jonathan. "Go back to your princess. Say, 'every man his own mattress.'"

"No. Any figure is wrong. The trouble with all of them is that as soon as you use one it begins to get in your way, and say all sorts of things for you that you never meant at all. And then if you notice it, it bothers you, and if you don't notice it, you get drawn into crooked thinking."

"And yet you can't think without them."

"No, you can't think without them."

"Well — where are we, anyway?" he asked placidly.

"I don't know at all. Only I feel sure that leading the simple life does n't depend on the things you do it *with*. Feeding your own cows and pigs and using pumps and candles brings you no nearer to it than marketing by telephone and using city water supply and electric lighting. I don't know what does bring you nearer, but I'm sure it must be something inside you."

"That sounds rather reasonable," said Jonathan; "almost scriptural —"

"Yes, I know," I said.

IV

After Frost

It is late afternoon in mid-September. I stand in my garden sniffing the raw air, and wondering, as always at this season, *will* there be frost to-night or will there not? Of course if I were a woodchuck or a muskrat, or any other really intelligent creature, I should know at once and act accordingly, but being only a stupid human being, I am thrown back on conjecture, assisted by the thermometer, and an appeal to Jonathan.

"Too much wind for frost," says he.

"Sure? I'd hate to lose my nasturtiums quite so early."

"You won't lose 'em. Look at the thermometer if you don't believe me. If it's above forty you're safe."

I look, and try to feel reassured. But I am not quite easy in my mind until next morning when, running out before breakfast, I make the rounds and find everything untouched.

But a few days later the alarm comes again. There is no wind this time, and, what is worse, an ominous silence falls at dusk over the orchard and meadow. "Why is everything so still?" I ask myself. "Oh, of course — the katydids are n't talking — and the crickets, and all the other whirr-y things. Ah! That means business! My poor garden!"

"Jonathan!" I call, as I feel rather than see his shape whirling noiselessly in at the big gate after his ride up from the station. "Help me cover my nasturtiums. There'll be frost to-night."

"Maybe," says Jonathan's voice.

"Not maybe at all — surely. Listen to the katydids!"

"You mean, listen to the absence of katydids."

"Very well. The point is, I want newspapers."

"No. The point is, I am to bring newspapers."

"Exactly."

"And tuck up your nasturtiums for the night in your peculiarly ridiculous fashion —"

"I know it looks ridiculous, but really it's sensible. There may be weeks of summer after this."

And so the nasturtiums are tucked up, cozily hidden under the big layers of sheets, whose corners we fasten down with stones. To be sure, the garden *is* rather a funny sight, with these pale shapes sprawling over its beds. But it pays. For in the morning, though over in the vegetable garden the squash leaves and lima beans are blackened and limp, my nasturtiums are still pert and crisp. I pull off the papers, wondering what the passers-by have thought, and lo! my gay garden, good for perhaps two weeks more!

But a day arrives when even newspaper coddling is of no avail. Sometimes it is in late September, sometimes not until October, but when it comes there is no resisting.

The sun goes down, leaving a clear sky paling to green at the horizon. A still cold falls upon the world, and I feel that it is the end. Shears in hand, I cut everything I can — nasturtiums down to the ground, — leaves, buds, and all, — feathery sprays of cosmos, asters by the armful. Those last

bouquets that I bring into the house are always the most beautiful, for I do not have to save buds for later cutting. There will, alas, be no later cutting.

So I fill my bowls and vases, and next morning I go out, well knowing what I shall see. It is a beautiful sight, too, if one can forget its meaning. The whole golden-green world of autumn has been touched with silver. In the low-lying swamp beyond the orchard it is almost like a light snowfall. The meadows rising beyond the barns are silvered over wherever the long tree-shadows still lie. And in my garden, too, where the shadows linger, every leaf is frosted, but as soon as the sun warms them through, leaf and twig turn dark and droop to the ground. It is the end.

Except, indeed, for my brave marigolds and calendulas and little button asters. It is for this reason that I have given them space all summer, nipping them back when they tried to blossom early, for they seem a bit crude compared with the other flowers. But now that frost is here, my feelings warm to them. I cannot criticize their color and tex-

ture, so grateful am I to them for not giving up. And when last night's cuttings have faded, I shall be very glad of a glowing mass of marigold beside my fireplace, and of the yellow stars of calendula, like embodied sunshine, on my dining-table.

Well, then, the frost has come! And after the first pang of realization, I find that, curiously enough, the worst is over. Since it has come, let it come! And now — hurrah for the garden house-cleaning! The garden is dead — the garden of yesterday! Long live the garden — the garden of to-morrow! For suddenly my mind has leaped ahead to spring.

I can hardly wait for breakfast to be over, before I am out in working clothes, pulling up things — not weeds now, but flowers, or what were flowers. Nasturtiums, asters, cosmos, snapdragon, stock, late-blooming cornflowers — up they all come, all the annuals, and the biennials that have had their season. I fling them together in piles, and soon have small haystacks all along my grass paths, and — there I am! Down again to the good brown earth!

It is with positive satisfaction that I stand

and survey my beds, great bare patches of earth, glorified here and there by low clumps of calendula and great bushes of marigold. Now, then! I can do anything! I can dig, and fertilize, and transplant. Best of all, I can plan and plan! The crisp wind stings my cheeks, but as I work I feel the sun hot on the back of my neck. I get the smell of the earth as I turn it over, mingled with the pungent tang of marigold blossoms, very pleasant out of doors, though almost too strong for the house except near a fireplace. I believe the most characteristic fall odors are to me this of marigold, mingled with the fragrance of apples piled in the orchard, the good smell of earth newly turned up, and the flavor of burning leaves, borne now and then on the wind, from the outdoor house-cleaning of the world.

There is perhaps no season of all the garden year that brings more real delight to the gardener, no time so stimulating to the imagination. This year in the garden has been good, but next year shall be better. All the failures, or near-failures, shall of course be turned into successes, and the successes shall

be bettered. Last year there were not quite enough hollyhocks, but next year there shall be such glories! There are seedlings that I have been saving, over on the edge of the phlox. I dash across to look them up — yes, here they are, splendid little fellows, leaves only a bit crumpled by the frost. I dig them up carefully, keeping earth packed about their roots, and one by one I convey them across and set them out in a beautiful row where I want them to grow next year. Their place is beside the old stone-flagged path, and I picture them rising tall against the side of the woodshed, whose barrenness I have besides more than half covered with honeysuckle.

Then, there are my foxgloves. Some of them I have already transplanted, but not all. There is a little corner full of stocky yearlings that I must change now. And that same corner can be used for poppies. I have kept seeds of this year's poppies — funny little brown pepper-shakers, with tiny holes at the end through which I shake out the fine seed dust. Doubtless they would attend to all this without my help, but I like to be sure

that even my self-seeding annuals come up where I most want them.

Biennials, like the foxglove and canterbury bells, are of course, the difficult children of the garden, because you have to plan not only for next year but for the year after. Next year's bloom is secured — unless they winter-kill — in this year's young plants, growing since spring, or even since the fall before. These I transplant for next summer's beauty. But for the year after I like to take double precautions. Already I have tiny seedlings, started since August, but besides these I sow seed, too late to start before spring. For a severe winter may do havoc, and I shall then need the early start given by fall sowing.

As I work on, I discover all sorts of treasures — young plants, seedlings from all the big-folk of my garden. Young larkspurs surround the bushy parent clumps, and the ground near the forget-me-nots is fairly carpeted with little new ones. I have found that, though the old forget-me-nots will live through, it pays to pull out the most ragged of them and trust to the youngsters to fill

their places. These, and English daisies, I let grow together about as they will. They are pretty together, with their mingling of pink, white, and blue, they never run out, and all I need is to keep them from spreading too far, or from crowding each other too much.

When my back aches from this kind of sorting and shifting, I straighten up and look about me again. Ah! The phlox! Time now to attend to that!

My white phlox is really the most distinguished thing in my garden. I have pink and lavender, too, but any one can have pink and lavender by ordering them from a florist. They can have white, too, but not my white. For mine never saw a florist; it is an inheritance.

Sixty or seventy years ago there was a beautiful little garden north of the old house tended and loved by a beautiful lady. The lady died, and the garden did not long outlive her. Its place was taken by a crab-apple orchard, which flourished, bore blossom and fruit, until in its turn it grew old, while the garden had faded to a dim tradition. But one day in August, a few years ago, I discovered

under the shade of an old crab tree, two slender sprays of white phlox, trying to blossom. In memory of that old garden and its lady, I took them up and cherished them. And the miracle of life was again made manifest. For from those two little half-starved roots has come the most splendid part of my garden. All summer it makes a thick green wall on the garden's edge, beside the flagged path. In the other beds it rises in luxuriant masses, giving background and body with its wonderful deep green foliage, which is greener and thicker than any other phlox I know. And when its season to bloom arrives — a long month, from early August to mid-September — it is a glory of whiteness, the tallest sprays on a level with my eyes, the shortest shoulder high, except when rain weighs down the heavy heads and they lean across the paths barring my passage with their fragrant wetness.

Here and there I have let the pink and lavender phlox come in, for they begin to bloom two weeks earlier, when the garden needs color. But always my white must dominate. And it does. Most wonderful of

all is it on moonlight nights of late August, when it broods over the garden like a white cloud, and the night moths come crowding to its fragrant feast, with their intermittent burring of furry wings.

Ah, well! the phlox has passed now, and its trim green leaves are brown and crackly. I can do what I like with it after this. So when my other transplanting grows tiresome, I fall upon my phlox. Every year some of it needs thinning, so quickly does it spread. I take the spading-fork, and, with what seems like utter ruthlessness, I pry out from the thickest centers enough good roots to give the rest breathing and growing space. Along the path edges I always have to cut out encroaching roots each year, or else soon there would be no path. But all that I take out is precious, either to give to friends for their gardens, or to enlarge the edges of my own. For this phlox needs almost no care, and will fight grass and weeds for itself.

There are phlox seedlings, too, all over the garden, but I have no way of telling what color they are, though usually I can detect the white by its foliage. I take them up and set

them out near the main phlox masses, and wait for the next season's blossoming before I give them their final place.

This is the time of year, too, when I give some attention to the rocks in my garden. Of course, in order to have a garden at all, it was necessary to take out enough rock to build quite a respectable stone wall. But that was not the end. There never will be an end. A Connecticut garden grows rocks like weeds, and one must expect to keep on taking them out each fall. The rest of the year I try to ignore them, but after frost I like to make a fresh raid, and get rid of another wheelbarrow load or so. And I always notice that for one barrow load of stones that go out, it takes at least two barrow loads of earth to fill in. Thus an excellent circulation is maintained, and the garden does not stagnate. Moreover, I take great pleasure in showing my friends — especially friends from the more earthy sections of New York and farther west — the piles of rock and the parts of certain stone walls about the place that have been literally made out of the cullings of my garden. They never believe me.

As I am thus occupied, — digging, planting, thinning, sowing, — I find it one of the happiest seasons of the year. It is partly the stimulus of the autumn air, partly the pleasure of getting at the ground. I think there are some of us, city folk though we be, who must have the giant Antæus for ancestor. We still need to get in close touch with the earth now and then. Children have a true instinct with their love of barefoot play in the dirt, and there are grown folks who still love it — but we call it gardening. The sight and the feel and the smell of my brown garden beds gives me a pleasure that is very deep and probably very primitive.

But there is another source of pleasure in my fall gardening — a pleasure not of the senses but of the imagination.

For as I do my work my fancy is active. As I transplant my young hollyhocks, I see them, not little round-leaved bunches in my hand, but tall and stately, aflare with colors — yellows, whites, pinks. As I dig about my larkspur and stake out its seedlings, they spire above me in heavenly blues. As I arrange the clumps of coarse-leaved young

foxgloves, I seem to see their rich tower-like clusters of old-pink bells bending always a little towards the southeast, where most sun comes from. As I thin my forget-me-not I see it — in my mind's eye — in a blue mist of spring bloom. Thus, a garden rises in my fancy, a garden where neither beetle, borer, nor cutworm doth corrupt, and where the mole doth not break in or steal, where gentle rain and blessed sun come as they are needed, where all the flowers bloom unceasingly in colors of heavenly light — a garden such as never yet existed nor ever shall, till the tales of fairyland come true. I shall never see that garden, yet every year it blooms for me afresh — after frost.

V

The Joys of Garden Stewardship

I SOMETIMES think I am coming to classify my friends according to the way they act when I talk about my garden. On this basis, there are three sorts of people.

First there are those who are obviously not interested. Such as these feel no answering thrill, even at the sight of a florist's spring catalogue. A weed inspires in them no desire to pull it. They may, however, be really nice people if they are still young; for, except by special grace, no one under thirty need be expected to care about gardens — it is a mature taste. But in the mean time I turn our talk in other channels.

Then there are the people who, when I approach the subject, brighten up, look intelligent, even eager, but in a moment make it clear that what they are eager for is a chance to talk about their own gardens. Mine is merely the stepping-stone, the bridge,

the handle. This is better than indifference, yet it is sometimes trying. One of my dearest friends thus tests my love now and then when she walks in my garden.

"Are n't those peonies lovely?" I suggest.

"Yes," dreamily; "you know I can't have that shade in my garden because —" and she trails off into a disquisition that I could, just at that moment, do without.

"Look at the height of that larkspur!" I say.

"Yes — but, you know, it would n't do for me to have larkspur when I go away so early. What I need is things for April and May."

"Well, I am not trying to *sell* you any," I am sometimes goaded into protesting. "I only wanted you to say they are pretty — pretty right here in *my* garden."

"Yes — yes — of course they are pretty — they 're lovely — you have a lovely garden, you know." She pulls herself up to give this tribute, but soon her eyes get the far-away look in them again, and she is murmuring, "Oh, I must write Edward to see about that hedge. Tell me, my dear, if you had a brick wall, would you have vines on it or wall-fruit?"

It is of no use. I cannot hold her long. I sometimes think she was nicer when she had no garden of her own. Perhaps she thinks I was nicer when I had none.

But there is another kind of garden manners — a kind that subtly soothes, cheers, perhaps inebriates. It is the manner of the friend who may, indeed, have a garden, but who looks at mine with the eye of adoption, temporarily at least. She walks down its paths, singling out this or that for notice. She suggests, she even criticizes, tenderly, as one who tells you an "even *more* becoming way" to arrange your little daughter's hair. She offers you roots and seeds and seedlings from her garden, and — last touch of flattery — she begs seeds and seedlings from yours.

For garden purposes, give me the manners of this third class. And, indeed, not for garden purposes alone. They are useful as applied to many things — children, particularly, and houses.

Undoubtedly the demand that I make upon my friends is a form of vanity, yet I cannot seem to feel ashamed of it. I admit at once that not the least part of my pleasure in

my flowers is the attention they get from others. Moreover, it is not only from friends that I seek this, but from every passer-by along my country road. There are gardens and gardens. Some, set about with hedges tall and thick, offer the delights of exclusiveness and solitude. But exclusiveness and solitude are easily had on a Connecticut farm, and my garden will none of them; it flings forth its appeal to every wayfarer. And I like it. I like my garden to "get notice." As people drive by I hope they enjoy my phlox. I furtively glance to see if they have an eye for the foxglove. I wonder if the calendulas are so tall that they hide the asters. And if, as I bend over my weeding, an automobile whirling past lets fly an appreciative phrase — "lovely flowers —" "wonderful yellow of —" "garden there,"— my ears are quick to receive it and I forgive the eddies of gasolene and dust that are also left by the vanishing visitant.

About few things can one be so brazen in one's enjoyment of recognition. One's house, one's clothes, one's work, one's children, all these demand a certain modesty of de-

meanor, however the inner spirit may puff. Not so one's garden. I fancy this is because, while I have a strong sense of ownership in it, I also have a strong sense of stewardship. As owner I must be modest, but as steward I may admire as openly as I will. Did I make my phlox? Did I fashion my asters? Am I the artificer of my fringed larkspur? Nay, truly, I am but their caretaker, and may glory in them as well as another, only with the added touch of joy that I, even I, have given them their opportunity. Like Paul I plant, like Apollos I water, but before the power that giveth the increase I stand back and wonder.

But it is not alone the results of my stewardship that give me joy. Its very processes are good. Delight in the earth is a primitive instinct. Digging is naturally pleasant, hoeing is pleasant, raking is pleasant, and then there is the weeding. For I am not the only one who sows seeds in my garden. One of my friends remarked cheerfully that he had planted twenty-seven different vegetables in his garden, and the Lord had planted two hundred and twenty-seven other kinds of things.

This is where the weeding comes in. Now a good deal has been said about the labor of weeding, but little about the gratifications of weeding. I don't mean weeding with a hoe. I mean yanking up, with movements suited to the occasion, each individual growing thing that does n't belong. Surely I am not the only one to have felt the pleasure of this. They come up so nicely, and leave such soft earth behind! And intellect is needed, too, for each weed demands its own way of handling: the adherent plantain needing a slow, firm, drawing motion, but very satisfactory when it comes; the evasive clover requiring that all its sprawling runners shall be gathered up in one gentle, tactful pull; the tender shepherd's purse coming easily on a straight twitch; the tough ragweed that yields to almost any kind of jerk. Even witch-grass, the bane of the farmer, has its rewarding side, when one really does get out its handful of wicked-looking, crawly, white tubers.

Weeding is most fun when the weeds are not too small. Yes, from the aspect of a sport there is something to be said for letting weeds grow. Pulling out little tender ones is poor

work compared with the satisfaction of hauling up a spreading treelet of ragweed or a far-flaunting wild buckwheat. You seem to get so much for your effort, and it stirs up the ground so, and no other weeds have grown under the shade of the big one, so its departure leaves a good bit of empty brown earth.

Surely, weeding is good fun. If faults could be yanked out of children in the same entertaining way, the orphan asylums would soon be emptied through the craze for adoption as a major sport.

One of the pleasantest mornings of my life was spent weeding, in the rain, a long-neglected corner of my garden, while a young friend stood around the edges and explained the current political situation to me, and carted away armfuls of green stuff as I handed them out to him. The rain drizzled, and the air was fragrant with the smell of wet earth and bruised stems. Ideally, of course, weeds should never reach this state of sportive rankness. But most of my friends admit, under pressure, that there are corners where such things do happen.

Naturally, all this is assuming that one is one's own gardener. There may be pleasure in having a garden kept up by a real gardener, but that always seems to me a little like having a doll and letting somebody else dress and undress it. My garden must never grow so big that I cannot take care of it — and neglect it — myself.

In saying this, however, I don't count rocks. When it comes to rocks, I call in Jonathan. And it often comes to rocks.

For mine is a Connecticut garden. Now in the beginning Connecticut was composed entirely of rocks. Then the little earth gnomes, fearing that no one would ever come there to give them sport, sprinkled a little earth amongst the rocks, partly covered some, wholly covered others, and then hid to see what the gardeners would do about it. And ever since the gardeners have been patiently, or impatiently, tucking in their seeds and plants in the thimblefuls of earth left by the gnomes. They have been picking out the rocks, or blowing them up, or burying them, or working around them; and every winter the little gnomes gather and push up a new

lot from the dark storehouses of the underworld. In the spring the gardeners begin again, and the little gnomes hold their sides with still laughter to watch the work go on.

"Rocks?" my friends say. "Do you mind the rocks? But they are a special beauty! Why, I have a rock in my garden that I have treated —"

"Very well," I interrupt rudely. "*A rock* is all very well. If I had *a rock* in my garden I could treat it, too. But how about a garden that is all rocks?"

"Oh — why — choose another spot."

Whereupon I reply, "You don't know Connecticut."

Ever since I began having a garden I have had my troubles with the rocks, but the worst time came when, in a mood of enthusiastic and absolutely unintelligent optimism, I decided to have a bit of smooth grass in the middle of my garden. I wanted it very much. The place was too restless; you could n't sit down anywhere. I felt that I had to have a clear green spot where I could take a chair and a book. I selected the spot, marked it off with string, and began to loosen up the earth

for a late summer planting of grass seed. Calendulas and poppies and cornflowers had bloomed there before, self-sown and able to look out for themselves, so I had never investigated the depths of the bed to see what the little gnomes had prepared for me. Now I found out. The spading-fork gave a familiar dull clink as it struck rock. I felt about for the edge; it was a big one. I got the crowbar and dropped it, in testing prods; it was a *very* big one, and only four inches below the surface. Grass would never grow there in a dry season. I moved to another part. Another rock, big too! I prodded all over the allotted space, and found six big fellows lurking just below the top of the soil. Evidently it was a case for calling in Jonathan.

He came, grumbling a little, as a man should, but very efficient, armed with two crowbars and equipped with a natural genius for manipulating rocks. He made a few well-placed remarks about queer people who choose to have grass where flowers would grow, and flowers where grass would grow, also about Connecticut being intended for a quarry and not for a garden anyhow. But all

this was only the necessary accompaniment of the crowbar-play. Soon, under the insistent and canny urgency of the bars, a big rock began to heave its shoulder into sight above the soil. I hovered about, chucking in stones and earth underneath, placing little rocks under the bar for fulcrums, pulling them out again when they were no longer needed, standing guard over the flowers in the rest of the garden, with repeated warnings. "Please, Jonathan, don't step back any farther; you'll trample the forget-me-nots!" "*Could* you manage to roll this fellow out along that path and not across the mangled bodies of the marigolds?" Jonathan grumbled a little about being expected to pick a half-ton pebble out of the garden with his fingers, or lead it out with a string.

"Oh, well, of course, if you *can't* do it I'll have to let the marigolds go this year. But you do such wonderful things with a crowbar, I thought you could probably just guide it a little." And Jonathan responds nobly to the flattery of this remark, and does indeed guide the huge thing, eases it along the narrow path, grazes the marigolds but leaves them

unhurt, until at last, with a careful arrangement of stone fulcrums and a skillful twist of the bars, the great rock makes its last response and lunges heavily past the last flower bed on to the grass beyond.

When the work was done, the edge of the garden looked like Stonehenge, and the spot where my grass was to be was nothing but a yawning pit, crying to be filled. We surveyed it with interest. "If we had a water-supply, I would n't make a grass-plot," I said; "I'd make a swimming-pool. It's deep enough."

"And sit in the middle with your book?" asked Jonathan.

But there was no water-supply, so we filled it in with earth. Thirty wheelbarrow loads went in where those rocks came out. And the little gnomes perched on Stonehenge and jeered the while. I photographed it, and the rocks "took" well, but as regards the gnomes, the film was underexposed.

Thus the grass seed was planted. And we reminded each other of the version of "America" once given, with unconscious inspiration, by a little friend of ours: —

> "Land where our father died,
> Land where the pilgrims pried."

It seemed to us to suit the adventure.

As I have said, I love to have my friends love my garden. But there is one thing about it that I find does not always appeal to them pleasantly, and that is its color-schemes. Yet this is not my doing. For in nothing do I feel more keenly the fact of my mere stewardship than in this matter of color-scheme.

I set out with a very rigid one. I was quite decided in my own mind that what I wanted was white and salmon-pink and lavender. Asters, phlox, sweet peas, hollyhocks, all were to bend themselves to my rules. At first affairs went very well. White was easy. White phlox I had, and have — an inheritance — which from a few roots is spreading and spreading in waves of whiteness that grow more luxuriant every year. But I bought roots of salmon-pink and lavender, and then my troubles commenced. About the third season strange things began to happen. The pink phlox had the strength of ten. It spread amazingly; but it forgot all about my rules. It degenerated, some of it —

reverted toward that magenta shade that nature seems so naturally to adore in the vegetable world. To my horror I found my garden blossoming into magenta pink, blue pink, crimson, cardinal — all the colors I had determined not under any circumstances to admit. On the other hand, the lavender phlox, which I particularly wanted, was most lovely, but frail. It refused to spread. It effaced itself before the rampant pink and its magenta-tainted brood. I vowed I would pull out the magentas, but each year my courage failed. They bloomed so bravely; I would wait till they were through. But by that time I was not quite sure which was which; I might pull out the wrong ones. And so I hesitated.

Moreover, I discovered, lingering among the flowers at dusk, that there were certain colors, most unpleasant by daylight, which at that time took on a new shade, and, for perhaps half an hour before night fell, were richly lovely. This is true of some of the magentas, which at dusk turn suddenly to royal purples and deep lavender-blues that are wonderfully satisfying.

For that half-hour of beauty I spare them. While the sun shines I try to look the other way, and at twilight I linger near them and enjoy their strange, dim glories, born literally of the magic hour. But I have trouble explaining them, by daylight, to some of my visitors who like color-schemes.

Insubordination is contagious. And I found after a while that my asters were not running true; queer things were happening among the sweet peas, and in the ranks of the hollyhocks all was not as it should be. And the last charge was made upon me by the children's gardens. Children know not color-schemes. What they demand is flowers, flowers — flowers to pick and pick, flowers to do things with. Snapdragon, for instance, is a jolly playmate, and little fingers love to pinch its cheeks and see its jaws yawn wide. But snapdragon tends dangerously toward the magenta. Then there was the calendula — a delight to the young, because it blooms incessantly long past the early frosts, and has brittle stems that yield themselves to the clumsiest plucking by small hands. But calendula ranges from a faded yellow, through

really pretty primrose shades, to a deep red-orange touched with maroon.

And, finally, there was the portulaca. Children love it, perhaps, best of all. It offers them fresh blossoms and new colors each morning, and it is even more easy to pick than the calendula. Who would deny them portulaca? Yet if this be admitted, one may as well give up the battle. For, as we all know, there is absolutely no color, except green, that portulaca does not perpetrate in its blossoms. It knows no shame.

In short, I am giving up. I am beginning to say with conviction that color-schemes are the mark of a narrow and rigid taste — that they are born of convention and are meant not for living things but for wall-papers and portières and clothes. Moreover, I am really growing callous — or is it, rather, broad? Colors in my garden that would once have made my teeth ache now leave them feeling perfectly comfortable. I find myself looking with unmoved flesh — no creeps nor withdrawals — upon a bed of mixed magentas, scarlets, rose-pinks, and yellow-pinks. I even look with pleasure. I begin to think there

may be a point beyond which discord achieves a higher harmony. At least, this sounds well. But, again, I find it hard to explain to some of my friends.

Indoors, it is another story. When I bring in the spoils of the garden I am again mistress and bend all to my will. Here I'll have no tricks of color played on me. Sunshine and sky, perhaps, work some spell, for as soon as I get within four walls my prejudices return; scarlets and crimsons and pinks have to live in different rooms. I must have my color-schemes again, and perhaps I am as narrow as the worst. Except, indeed, for the children's bowls; here the pink and the magenta, the lamb and the lion, may lie down together. But it takes a little child to lead them.

Out in my garden I feel myself less and less owner, more and more merely steward. I decree certain paths, and the phlox says, "Paths? Did you say paths?" and obliterates them in a season's growth, so that children walk by faith and not by sight. I decree iris in one corner, and the primroses say, "Iris? Not at all. This is our bed. Iris in-

deed!" And I submit, and move the iris elsewhere.

And yet this slipping of responsibility is pleasant, too. So long as my garden will let me dig in it and weed it and pick it, so long as it entertains my friends for me, so long as it tosses up an occasional rock so that Jonathan does not lose all interest in it, so long as it plays prettily with the children and flings gay greetings to every passer-by, I can find no fault with it.

The joys of stewardship are great and I am well content.

VI

Trout and Arbutus

EVERY year, toward the end of March, I find Jonathan poking about in my sewing-box. And, unless I am very absent-minded, I know what he is after.

"No use looking there," I remark; "I keep my silks put away."

"I want red, and as strong as there is."

"I know what you want. Here." and I hand him a spool of red buttonhole twist.

"Ah! Just right!" And for the rest of the evening his fingers are busy.

Over what? Mending our trout-rods, of course. It is pretty work, calling for strength and precision of grasp, and as he winds and winds, adjusting all the little brass leading-rings, or supplying new ones, and staying points in the bamboo where he suspects weakness, we talk over last year's trout-pools, and wonder what they will be like this year.

But beyond wonder we do not get, often for weeks after the trout season is, legisla-

tively, "open." Jonathan is "busy." I am "busy." We know that, if April passes, there is still May and June, and so, if at the end of April, or early May, we do at last pick up our rods, — all new-bedight with red silk windings, and shiny with fresh varnish, — it is not alone the call of the trout that decides us, but another call which is to me at least more imperious, because, if we neglect it now, there is no May and June in which to heed it. It is the call of the arbutus.

Any one with New England traditions knows what this call is. Its appeal is to something far deeper than the love of a pretty flower. For it is the flower that, to our fathers and our grandfathers, and to their fathers and grandfathers, meant spring; and not spring in its prettiness and ease, appealing to the idler in us, nor spring in its melancholy, appealing to — shall I say the poet in us? But spring in its blessedness of opportunity, its joyously triumphant life, appealing to the worker in us. Here, of course, we touch hands with all the races of the world for whom winter has been the supreme menace, spring the supreme and saving miracle. But each race has its own

symbols, and to the New Englander the symbol is the arbutus.

This may seem a bit of sentimentality. And, indeed, we need not expect to find it expressed by any New England farmer. New England does not go out in gay companies to bring back the first blossoms. But New England does nothing in gay companies. It has been taught to distrust ceremonies and expression of any sort. It rejoices with reticence, it appreciates with a reservation. And yet I have seen a sprig of arbutus in rough and clumsy buttonholes on weather-faded lapels which, the rest of the twelve-month through, know no other flower. And when, in unfamiliar country, I have interrupted the ploughing to ask for guidance, I usually get it: — "Arbutus? Yaas. The's a lot of it up along that hillside and in the woods over beyond — 't was out last week, some of it, I happened to notice" — this in the apologetic tone of one who admits a weakness — "guess you'll find all you want." I venture to say that of no other wild flower, except those which work specific harm or good, could I get such information.

To many of us, city-bred, the tradition comes through inheritance. It means, perhaps, the shy, poetic side of our father's boyhood, only half acknowledged, after the New England fashion, but none the less real and none the less our possession. It means rare days, when the city — whose chiefest signs of spring were the flare of dandelions in yards and parks and the chatter of English sparrows on ivy-clad church walls — was left behind, and we were "in the country." It was a country excitingly different from the country of the summer vacation, a country not deeply green, but warmly brown, and sweet with the smell of moist, living earth. Green enough, indeed, in the spring-fed meadows and folds of the hills, where the early grass flashes into vividest emerald, but in the woods the soft mist-colored mazes of multitudinous twigs still show through their veilings and dustings of color — palest green of birches, gray-green of poplar, yellow-green of willows, and redder tones of the maples; and along the fence-lines and roadsides — blessed, untidy fence-lines and roadsides of New England — a fine penciling of red stems — the cut-back

maple bushes and tangled vines alive to their tips and just bursting into leaf. And everywhere in the woods, on fence-lines and roadsides, the white blossoms of the "shad-blow," daintiest of spring trees, — too slight for a tree, indeed, though too tall for a bush and looking less like a tree in blossom than like floating blossoms caught for a moment among the twigs. A moment only, for the first gust loosens them again and carpets the woods with their petals, but while they last their whiteness shimmers everywhere.

Such rare days were all blown through with the wonderful wind of spring. Spring wind is really different from any other. It is not a finished thing, like the mellow winds of summer and the cold blasts of winter. It is an imperfect blend of shivering reminiscence and eager promise. One moment it breathes sun and stirring earth, the next it reminds us of old snow in the hollows, and bleak northern slopes.

When, on these days, the wind blew to us, almost before we saw it, the first greeting of the arbutus, it always seemed that the day had found its complete and satisfying ex-

pression. Every one comes to realize, at some time in his life, the power of suggestion possessed by odors. Does not half the power of the Church lie in its incense? An odor, just because it is at once concrete and formless, can carry an appeal overwhelmingly strong and searching, superseding all other expression. This is the appeal made to me by the arbutus. It can never be quite precipitated into words, but it holds in solution all the things it has come to mean — dear human tradition and beloved companionship, the poetry of the land and the miracle of new birth.

In late March or early April I am likely to see the first blossom on some friend's table — I try not to see it first in a florist's display! To my startled question she gives reassuring answer, "Oh, no, not from around here. This came from Virginia."

Days pass, and, perhaps, the mail brings some to me, this time from Pennsylvania or New Jersey, and soon I can no longer ignore the trays of tight, leafless bunches for sale on street corners and behind plate-glass windows. "From York State," they tell me. I grow restive.

"Jonathan," I say, holding up a spray for him to smell, "we've got to go. You can't resist that. We'll take a day and go for it — and trout, too."

It is as well that arbutus comes in the trout season, for to take a day off just to pick a flower might seem a little absurd. But, coupled with trout — all is well. Trout is food. One must eat. The search for food needs no defense, and yet, the curious fact is, that if you go for trout and don't get any, it does n't make so much difference as you might suppose, but if you go for arbutus and don't get any, it makes all the difference in the world. And so Jonathan knows that in choosing his brook for that particular day, he must have regard primarily to the arbutus it will give us and only secondarily to the trout.

Every one knows the kind of brook that is, for every one knows the kind of country arbutus loves — hilly country, with slopes toward the north; bits of woodland, preferably with pine in it, to give shade, but not too deep shade; a scrub undergrowth of laurel and huckleberry and bay; and always, some-

where within sight or hearing, water. It is curious how arbutus, which never grows in wet places, yet seems to like the neighborhood of water. It loves the slopes above a brook or the shaggy hillsides overlooking a little pond or river.

Fortunately, there is such a brook, in just such country, on our list. There are not so many trout as in other brooks, but enough to justify our rods; and not so much arbutus as I could find elsewhere, but enough — oh, enough!

To this brook we go. We tie Kit at the bridge, Jonathan slings on a fish-basket, to do for both, and I take a box or two for the flowers. But from this moment on our interests are somewhat at variance. The fact is, Jonathan cares a little more about the trout than about the arbutus, while I care a little more about the arbutus than about the trout. His eye is keenly on the brook, mine is, yearningly, on the ragged hillsides that roll up above it.

Jonathan feels this. "There is n't any for two fields yet — might as well stick to the brook."

"I know. I thought perhaps I'd go on down and let you fish this part. Then I'd meet you beyond the second fence —"

"Oh, no, that won't do at all. Why, there's a rock just below here — down by that wild cherry — where I took out a beauty last year, and left another. I want you to go down and get him."

"You get him. I don't mind."

"Oh, but I mind. Here, I've got it all planned: there's a bit of brush-fishing just below —"

"No brush-fishing for me, please!"

"That's what I'm saying, if you'll only give me time. I'll take that — there are always two or three in there — and when you've finished here you can go around me and fish the bend, under the hemlocks, and then the first arbutus is just beside that, and I'll join you there."

"Well" — I assent grudgingly — "only, really, I'd be just as happy if you'd fish the whole thing and let me go right on down —"

"No, you would n't. Now, remember to sneak before you get to that rock. Drop in six feet above it and let the current do the

rest. They're awfully shy. I expect you to get at least one there, and two down at the bend." He trudges off to his brush-fishing and leaves me bound in honor to extract a trout from under that rock. I deposit my boxes in the meadow above it, and "sneak" down. The sneak of a trout fisherman is like no other form of locomotion, and I am convinced that the human frame was not evolved with it in mind. But I resort to it in deference to Jonathan's prejudices — in deference, also, to the fact that when I do not the trout seldom bite. And Jonathan is so trustfully counting on my getting that trout!

I did get him. I dropped in my line, as per directions, and let the current do the rest; had the thrill of feeling the line suddenly caught and drawn under the rock, held, then wiggled slightly; I struck, felt the weight, drew back steadily, and in a few moments there was a flopping in the grass behind me.

So that was off my mind.

I strung him on a twig of wild cherry, gathered up my boxes, and wandered along the faint path, back of the patch of brush where, I knew, Jonathan was cheerfully

threading his line through tangles of twig, briar, and vine, compared with which the needle's eye is as a yawning barn door. Jonathan's attitude toward brush-fishing is something which I respect without understanding. Down one long field I went, where the brook ran in shallow gayety, and there, ahead, was the bend, a sudden curve of water, deepening under the roots of an overhanging hemlock. I climbed the stone wall beside, glanced at the water — very trouty water indeed — glanced at the hill-pasture above — very arbutusy indeed — laid down my rod and my trout and my box, and ran up the low bank to a clump of bay and berry-bushes that I thought I remembered. . . . Yes! There it was! I had remembered! Ah! The dear things!

When you first find arbutus, there is only one thing to do: — lie right down beside it. Its fragrance as it grows is different from what it is after it is picked, because with the sweetness of the blossoms is mingled the good smell of the earth and of the woody twigs and of the dried grass and leaves. And there are other rewards one gets by lying down. It is

all very well to talk proudly about man's walking with his head erect and his face to the heavens, but if we keep that posture all the time we miss a good deal. The attitude of the toad and the lizard is not to be scorned, though when the needs of locomotion convert it into the fisherman's "sneak," it is, as I have suggested, to be sparingly indulged in. But if we could only nibble now and then from "the other side" of Alice's mushroom, what a new outlook we should get on the world that now lies about our feet! What new aspects of its beauty would be revealed to us: the forest grandeurs of the grass, the architecture of its slim shafts with their pillared aisles and pointed arches of interlocking and upspringing curves, their ceiling traceries of spraying tops against a far-away background of sky!

To know arbutus, you must stoop to its level, and look across the fine, frosty fur of its stiff little leaves, and feel the nestle of its stems to the ground, the little up-fling of their tips toward the sun, and the neat radiance of its flower clusters, with their blessed fragrance and their pure, babyish color.

But after that? You want to pick it. Yes, you really want to pick it!

In this it is different from other flowers. Most of them I am well content to leave where they grow. In fact, the love of picking things — flowers or anything else — is a youthful taste: we lose it as we grow older; we become more and more willing to appreciate without acquiring, or rather, appreciation becomes to us a finer and more spiritual form of acquiring. Is it possible that, after all, the old idea of heaven as a state of enraptured contemplation is in harmony with the trend of our development?

But if there is arbutus in heaven, I shall need to develop a good deal further not to want to pick it. It suggests picking; it almost invites it. There is something about the way it nestles and hides, that makes you want to see it better. Here is a spray of pure white, living under a green tent of overlapping leaves; one must raise it, and nip off just one leaf, so that the blossoms can see out. There is another, a pink cluster, showing faintly through the dry, matted grass. You feel for the stem, pull it gently, and, lo, it is many

stems, which have crept their way under the tangle, and every one is tipped with a cluster of stars or round little buds each on its long stem, fairly begging to be picked. It gets picked.

Yet sometimes its very beauty has stayed my hand. I shall never forget one clump I found, growing out of a bank of deep green moss, partly shaded by a great hemlock. The soft pink blossoms — luxuriant leafy sprays of them — were lying out on the moss in a pagan carelessness of beauty, as though some god had willed it there for his pleasure. I sat beside it a long time, and in the end I left it without picking it.

On this particular day, Jonathan being still lost in the brush patch, I had risen from my visit with the first-discovered blossoms and wandered on, from clump to clump, wherever the glimpse of a leaf attracted me, picking the choicest here and there and dropping them into my box. After I do not know how long, I was roused by Jonathan's whistle. I was some distance up the hillside by this time, and he was beside the brook, at the bend.

"What luck?" he called.

"Good luck! I've found lots. Come up!"

He took a few steps up toward me, so that conversation could drop from shouting to speaking levels. "How many did you get?" he asked.

"How many? . . . Oh . . . why . . . Oh, I got one up there where you showed me — under the rock, you know."

"Good one?"

"Eight inches. He's down there by the bars."

"Good! And what about the bend?"

"The bend? Oh, I didn't fish there — look at these! Aren't they beauties?" I came down the hill to hold my open box up to his face. But my casual word almost effaced the scent of the flowers.

"Ah — yes — delicious — didn't fish there? Why not? Did they see you?"

"Who? The trout? I don't know. But I saw this. And I just had to pick it."

"Well! You're a great fisherman! And with that water right there beside you! Lord!"

"With the arbutus right here beside me! Lord!"

"But the arbutus would wait."

"But the trout would wait. They're waiting for you now, don't you hear them? Go and fish there!"

"No. That's your pool." Jonathan has a way of bestowing a trout-pool on me as if it were a bouquet. To refuse its opportunities is almost like throwing his flowers back in his face.

"Well — of course it's a beautiful pool —"

"Best on the brook," murmured Jonathan.

"But, truly, I'd enjoy it just as much to have you fish it."

"Nobody can fish it now for a while. I thought you'd be there, of course, and I came stamping along down, close by the bank. They would n't bite now — not for half an hour, anyway."

"Well, then, that 's just right. We'll go on up the hillside for half an hour, and then come back and fish it. Set your rod up against the bayberry here, and come along — look there! you're almost stepping on some!"

Jonathan, gradually adjusting himself to the turn of things, stood his rod up against the bush with the meticulous care of the true

sportsman. "Where did you leave yours?" he asked, with a suspiciousness born of a deep knowledge of my character.

"Oh, down by the bars."

"Standing up or lying down?"

"Lying down, I think. It's all right."

"It's not all right if it's lying down. Anything might trample on it."

"For instance, what? — birds or crickets?"

"For instance, people or cows." He strode down the hill, and I saw him stoop. As he returned I could read disapproval in his gait. "Will you never learn how to treat a rod! It was lying just beyond the bars. I must have landed within two feet of it when I jumped over."

"I'm sorry. I meant to go back. I know perfectly how to treat a rod. My trouble comes in knowing when to apply my knowledge. . . . Well, let's go up there. Near those big hemlocks there's some, I remember." And we wandered on, separating a little to scan the ground more widely.

Once having pried his mind away from the trout, Jonathan was as keen for arbutus as I could wish, and soon I heard an exclamation,

and saw him kneel. "Oh, come over!" he called; "you really ought to see this growing!"

"But there's some I want, right here, that's lovely —"

"Never mind. Come and see this — oh, come!"

Of course I come, and of course I am glad I came, and of course soon I am obliged to call Jonathan to see some I have found — "Jonathan, it is truly the loveliest *yet!* It's the way it grows — with the moss and all — please come!" And of course he comes.

We had been on the hillside a long half-hour, much nearer an hour, when Jonathan began to grow restive. "Don't you think you have enough?" he suggested several times. Finally, he spoke plainly of the trout.

"Oh, yes, of course," I said, "you go down and I'll follow just as soon as I've gone along that upper path."

Not at all. That was not what was wanted. So I turned and we went down the hill, back to the bend, whose seductions I had been so puzzlingly able to resist. I am sure Jonathan has never yet quite understood how I could

leave that bit of water at my left hand and turn away to the right.

"Now — sneak!"

We sneaked, and I sank down just back of the edge of the bank. Jonathan crouched some feet behind, coaching me: — "Now — draw out a little more line — not too much — there — and have some slack in your hand. Now, up-stream fifteen feet — allow for the wind — wait till that gust passes — now! Good! First-rate! Now let her drift — there — what did I tell you? Give him line! *Give* him line! Now, feel of him — careful! You'll know when to strike . . . there! . . . Oh! too bad!"

For as I struck, my line held fast.

"Snagged, by gummy! Can't you pull clear?"

"Not without stirring up the whole pool. You'll have to do the fishing, after all."

"Oh! *too* bad! That's hard luck!"

"Not a bit. I like to watch you do it."

And so indeed I did. Once having realized that I was temporarily laid by, Jonathan put his whole mind on the pool, while I, being honorably released from all responsibility,

except that of keeping my line taut, could put my whole mind on his performance. There is a little the same sort of pleasure in watching the skillful handling of a rod that there is in watching the bow-action of a violinist. Both things demand the utmost nicety of adjustment: body, arm, wrist, fingers uniting in an interplay of efficiency exactly adapted to the intricately shifting needs of each moment.

Thus I watched, through the typical stages of the sport: the delicate flip of the bait into the current at just the right spot; its swift descent, imperceptibly guided by the rod's quivering tip; its slower drift toward deep water; its sudden vanishing, and the whir of the reel as the line goes out; then the pause, the critical moments of "feeling for him"; at last the strike . . . and then, a flopping in the grass behind me, and Jonathan crawling back to kill and unhook him.

"Don't get up. There's probably another one," he said; and soon, by the same reptilian methods, was back for another try. There was another one, and yet another, and then a little fellow, barely hooked. "That's all,"

said Jonathan, as he rose to put him back into the pool, and we watched the pretty spotted creature fling himself upstream with a wild flourish of his gleaming body.

"Now I'll get you clear," said Jonathan, wading out into the water, and, with sleeves rolled high, feeling deep, deep down under the opposite bank. "He had you all right — it's wound round a root and then jabbed deep into it . . . hard luck! I wanted you to get those fellows!" And to this day I am sure he remembers those trout with a tinge of regret.

I had intended leaving him to fish the rest of the brook, while I went back to that upper path to look up two or three special arbutus clumps that I knew, but seeing his depression over the snag incident, I could not suggest this. Instead I followed the stream with him, accepting his urgent offer of all the best pools, while he, taking what was left, drew out perfectly good trout from the most unhopeful-looking bits of water. And at the end, there was time to return along the upper path and visit my old friends, so both of us were satisfied.

On such days, however, there is always one person who is not satisfied, and that is, Kit the horse. Kit has borne with our vagaries for many years, but she has never come to understand them. She never fails to greet our return, as our voices come within the range of her pricked-up ears, by a prolonged and reproachful whinny, which says as plainly as is necessary, "Back? Well — I should *think* it was time! *I should think it was TIME!*" Now and then we have thought it would be pleasant to have a little motor-car that could be tucked away at any roadside, without reference to a good hitching-place, but if we had it, I am sure we should miss that ungracious welcoming whinny. We should miss, too, the exasperated violence of Kit's pace on the first bit of the home road — a violence expressing in the most ostentatious manner her opinion of folks who keep a respectable horse hitched by the roadside, far from the delights of the dim, sweet stable and the dusty, sneezy, munchy hay.

But leaving out this little matter of Kit's preference, and also the other little matter of the trout's preference, I feel sure that an arbu-

tus-trouting is peculiarly satisfying. It meets every human need — the need of food and beauty, the need of feeling strong and skillful, the need of becoming deeply aware of nature as living and kind. Moreover, it is very satisfying afterwards. As we sat that evening, over a late supper, with a shallow dish of arbutus beside us, I remarked, "The advantage of getting arbutus is, that you bring the whole day home with you and have it at your elbow."

"The advantage of getting trout," remarked Jonathan dreamily, as if to himself, "is, that you bring your whole day home with you, and have it for breakfast."

VII

Without the Time of Day

"JONATHAN, did you ever live without a clock, — whole days, I mean, — days and days —"

"When I was a boy — most of the time, I suppose. But the family did n't like it."

"Of course. But did you like it?"

"Yes, I liked it all. I seem to remember getting pretty hungry sometimes, but it's all rather good as I look back on it."

"Let 's do it!"

"Now?"

"No. Society is an enlarged family, and would n't like it. But this summer, when we camp."

"How do you know we're going to camp?"

"The things we know best we don't always know how we know."

"Well, then, — *if* we camp —"

"*When* we camp — let 's live without a watch."

"You 'd need one to get there."

"Take one, and let it run down."

As it turned out, my "when" was truer than Jonathan's "if." We did camp. We did, however, use watches to get there: when we expressed our baggage, when we sent our canoe, when we took the trolley car and the train; and the watch was still going as our laden craft nosed gently against the bank of the river-island that was to be our home for two weeks. It was late afternoon, and the shadows of the steep woods on the western bank had already turned the rocks in mid-stream from silver to gray, and dimmed the brightness of the swift water, almost to the eastern shore.

"Will there be time to get settled before dark?" I asked, as we stepped out into the shallow water and drew up the canoe to unload.

"Shall I look at my watch to see?" asked Jonathan, with a note of amiable derision in his voice.

"Well, I *should* rather like to know what time it is. We won't begin till to-morrow."

"You mean, we won't begin to stop watching. All right. It's just seventeen and a half

minutes after five. I'll give you the seconds if you like."

"Minutes will do nicely, thank you."

"Lots of time. You collect firewood while I get the tent ready. Then it'll need us both to set it up."

We worked busily, happily. Ah! The joyous elation of the first night in camp! Is there anything like it? With days and days ahead, and not even one counted off the shining number! All the good things of childhood and maturity seem pressed into one mood of flawless, abounding happiness.

By dark the tent was up, the baggage stowed, the canoe secured, the fire glowing in a bed of embers, and we sat beside it, looking out past the glooms of the hemlocks across the moonlit river, — sat and ate city-cooked chicken and sandwiches and drank thermos-bottled tea.

"To-morrow we'll cook," I said. "To-night it's rather nice not to have to. Look at the moonlight on that rock! How black it makes the eddy below!"

"Good bass under there," said Jonathan. "We'll get some to-morrow."

"Maybe."

"Well, of course, it 's always maybe, with bass. Well — I'm done — and it's quarter to ten — late! Oh! Excuse me! Maybe you'd rather I had n't told you. By the way, do I wind my watch to-night or not?"

"Not."

"Not it is, then. Sure you would n't rather have it wound, though? We can leave it hanging in the tent. It won't break loose and bite you."

"Yes, it would. There would be a something — a taint —"

"Oh, *all* right!"

We slept with the murmur of the river running through our dreams, — a murmur of many voices: deep voices, high voices, grumbling voices as the stones go grinding and rolling along the ever-changing bottom, — and only half roused when the dawn chorus of the birds filled the air. That dawn chorus was something we should have been loath to miss. Through the first gray of the morning there comes a stir in the woods, an expectant tremor; a bird peeps softly and is still; then

another, and another, "softly conferring together." As the light grows warmer, comes a clearer note from some leader, then a full, complete song; another, and the woods are awake, flinging out their wonderful song-greeting to the morning. There is in it a prodigality of swift-changing beauty like ocean surf: a continuous and intricate interweaving of rhythms, pulses and ebbings of clear tone, beautiful phrases rising antiphonal, showerings of bright notes, moments of subsidence, almost of pause. As the light grows and sharpens, the music reaches a crescendo of exuberance, and at last dies down as real day comes, bringing with it the day's work. On our island the leader of the chorus was almost always a song sparrow, though once or twice a wood thrush came over from the shore woods and filled the hemlock shadows with the limpid splendors of his song.

Hearing the chorus through our dreams, we slept again, and when I really waked the sun was high, flecking the eastern V of our tent with dazzling patches. I heard Jonathan moving about outside, and the crackling of a new-made fire. I went to the front of the

tent and looked out. Yes, there they were, the fire and Jonathan, in a quiet space of shade where the early coolness still hung. Beyond them, half shut out from view by the low-spreading hemlock boughs, was the open river — such gayety of swift water! Such dazzle of midsummer morning! I drew back, eager to be out in it.

"Bacon and eggs, is it?" called Jonathan, "or shall I run down and try for a bass?"

"Don't!" I called. I knew that if he once got out after bass he was lost to me for the day. And now we had cut loose from even the mild tyranny of his watch. As I thought of this I went over to the many-forked tree, whose close-trimmed branches served our tent as hat-rack, clothes-rack, everything-that-can-hang-or-perch-rack, and opened Jonathan's watch.

"Well, what time is it?" Jonathan was peering in between the tent-flaps.

"Twenty-two minutes before five."

"A.M., I judge. Sorry you did n't let me wind it?"

"Not a bit. I was just curious to see when it stopped, that was all."

"Well, now you know. Hereafter the official time for the camp is 4.38 — A.M. or P.M., according to taste. Come along. The bacon's done, and I'm blest if I want to drop in the eggs."

Dropping an egg will never, I fear, be one of Jonathan's most finished performances. He watched me do it with generous admiration. "If you could just get over being scared of them," I suggested, as the last one plumped into the pan and set up its gentle sizzle.

"No use. I *am* scared of the things. I tap and tap, and nothing happens, and then I get mad and tap hard, and they 're all over the place."

By the time breakfast was over, even the coolness under the hemlocks was beginning to grow warm and aromatic. The birds in the shore woods were quieter, though out at the sunny end of our island, where the hemlocks gave place to low scrub growth, the song sparrow sang gayly now and then.

"Now," said Jonathan, "what about fishing?"

"Well — let's fish!"

"One up stream and one down, or keep together?"

"Together," I decided. "If we go two ways there 's no telling when I'll ever see you again."

"Yes, there is: when I'm hungry."

"No; some time after you 've noticed you 're hungry."

"Now, if we had watches it would be so much simpler: we could meet here at, say, one o'clock."

"Simple, indeed! When did you ever look at a watch when you were fishing, unless I made you? No, my way is simple, but we stay together."

Of course, in river fishing, "together" means simply not absolutely out of sight of each other. Jonathan may be up to his arm-pits in mid-current, or marooned on a rock above a swirling eddy, while I am in a similar situation beyond calling distance, but so long as a bend in the river does not cut us off, we are "together," and very companionable togetherness it is, too. When I see Jonathan wildly waving to attract my attention, I know he has either just caught a big bass or else just

lost one, and this gives me something to smile over as I wonder which it is. After a time, if I am catching shiners and no bass, and Jonathan does n't seem to be moving, I infer that his luck is better than mine, and drift along toward him. Or it may be the other way around, and he comes to look me up. Bass are the most uncertain of fish, and no one can predict when they will elect to bite, or where. Sometimes they are in the still water, deep or shallow according to their caprice; sometimes they hang on the edges of the rapids; sometimes they are in the dark, smooth eddies below the great boulders; sometimes in the clear depths around the rocks near shore. Each day afresh, — indeed, each morning and each afternoon, — the fisherman must try, and try, and try, until he discovers what their choice has been for that special time. Yet no fisherman who has once drawn out a good bass from a certain bit of water can help feeling, next time, that there is another waiting for him there. That is one of the reasons why he is always hopeful, and so always happy. The fish he has caught, at this well-remembered spot and that, rise

up out of the past and flick their tails at him; and all the stretches between — stretches of water that have never for him held anything but shiners, stretches of time diversified by not even a nibble — sink into pleasant insignificance.

We banked our fire, stowed everything in the tent that a thunderstorm would hurt, and splashed out into the river. There it lay in all its bright, swift beauty, and we stood a moment, looking, feeling the push of the water about our knees and the warmth of the sun on our shoulders.

"It makes a difference, sleeping out in it all," I said. "You feel as if it belonged to you so much more. I quite own the river this morning, don't you?"

"Quite. But not the bass in it. Bet you don't catch one!"

"Bet I beat you!"

"Bass, mind you. Sunfish don't count. You're always catching sunfish."

"They count in the pan. But I'll beat you on bass. I know some places —"

"Who does n't? All right, go ahead!"

We were off; Jonathan, as usual, wading

up to his chest or perched on a bit of boulder above some dark, slick rapid; I preferring water not more than waist-deep, and not too far from shore to miss the responses of the wood-folk to my passing: soft flurries of wings; shy, half-suppressed peepings; quick warning notes; light footfalls, hopping or running or galloping; the snapping of twigs and the crushing of leaves. Some sounds tell me who the creature is, — the warning of the blue jay, the whirr of the big ruffed grouse, the thud of the bounding rabbit, — but many others leave me guessing, which is almost better. When a very big stick snaps, I always feel sure a deer is stealing away, though Jonathan assures me that a chewink can break twigs and "kick up a row generally," so that you'd swear it was nothing smaller than a wild bull.

So we fished that day. When I caught a bass, which was seldom, I whooped and waved it at Jonathan, and when I caught a shiner, which was rather often, I waved it too, just to keep his mind occupied. Hours passed, and we met at a bend in the river where the deep water glides close to shore.

"Hungry?" I asked.

"Now you speak of it, yes."

"Shall we go back?"

"How can I tell? Now, if we only had that watch we'd know whether we ought to be hungry or not."

"What does that matter, if we *are* hungry? Besides, if you'd had a watch, you'd have had to carry it in your teeth. You know perfectly well you would n't have brought it, anyway."

"Well — then, at least when we got back, we should have known whether we ought to have been hungry or not. Now we shall never know."

"Never! Oh! Look there, Jonathan! We're going to catch it!" A sense of growing shadow in the air had made me look up, and there, back of the steep-rising woods, hung a blue-black cloud, with ragged edges crawling out into the brightness of the sky.

"Sure enough! The bass 'll bite now, if it really comes. Wait till the first drops, and see what you see."

We had not long to wait. There came that sudden expectancy in the air and the trees,

the strange pallor in the light, the chill sweep of wind gusts with warm pauses between. Then a few big drops splashed on the dusty, sun-baked stones about us.

"Now! Wade right out there, to the edge of that ledge — don't slip over, it's deep. I'll go down a little way."

I waded out carefully, and cast, in the smooth, dark water already beginning to be rain-pocked. It was surprisingly shivery, that storm wind! I glanced toward shore to look for shelter — I remembered an overhanging ledge of rock — then my line went taut! I forgot about shelter, forgot about being chilly; I knew it was a good bass.

I got him in — too big to go through the hole in my creel — cast for another — and another — and yet another. The rain began to fall in sheets, and the wind nearly blew me over, but who could run away from such fishing? The surface of the river, deep blue-gray, seemed rising everywhere in little jets to meet the rain. Rapids, eddies, still waters, weedy edges, all looked alike; there were neither waves nor swirls nor glassy slicks, but all were roughly furry under the multi-

tudinous assaults of the fierce rain-drops. The sky was mottled lead-color, the wind blew less strongly, but cold — cold. And under that water the bass were biting, my rod was bending double, my reel softly screaming as I gave line, and one after another I drew the fish alongside and dipped them out with my landing net.

Then, as suddenly as they had begun, they stopped biting. I waited long minutes; nothing happened, and all at once I realized that I was very wet and very cold. Wading ashore, I saw Jonathan shivering along up the narrow beach toward me, his shoulders drawn in to half their natural spread, neck tucked in between his collar-bones, knees slightly bent.

"You can't be cold?" I questioned as soon as he was near enough to hear me through the slash of the rain and wind.

"No, of course not; are you?"

We did n't discuss it, but ran up the bank to the rock-ledge and crouched under it, our teeth literally chattering.

"Did you ever see such fishing?" I managed to stammer.

"Great! But oh, *why* did n't I bring the whiskey bottle?"

"Let's run for camp! We can't be wetter."

We crawled out into the rain again, and first sprinted and then dog-trotted along the river edge. No bird notes now in the woods beside us, no whirring of wings; only the rain sounds: soft swishings and drippings and gusty showerings, very different from the flat, flicking sounds when rain first starts in dry woods.

Camp looked a little cheerless, but a blazing fire, started with dry stuff we had stowed inside the tent, changed things, and dry clothes changed them still more, and we sat within the tent flaps and ate ginger-snaps in great contentment of spirit while we waited for the rain to stop.

It did stop, and very soon the fish were sizzling in the pan.

"Of course, if we had a watch, now —" suggested Jonathan, as he carefully tucked under the pan little sticks of just the right length.

"What should we know more than we do now — that we're hungry?" I asked.

"Well, for one thing, we'd know what time it is," replied Jonathan tranquilly.

"And for another we'd know whether it's dinner or supper I'm cooking," I supplemented. "But does it matter? You won't get anything different, no matter which it is — just fish is what you'll get. And pretty soon the sun will be out, and you can set up a stick and watch the shadow and make a sundial for yourself."

"Oh, I don't really care which it is."

"Do you suppose I don't know that! And meanwhile, you might cut the bread and make some toast, — there are some good embers on your side under the pan, — and I'll get the butter, and there we'll be."

By the time the toast was made and the fish curling brownly away from the pan, the sun had indeed come out, at first pale and watery, then clear, and still high enough in the heavens to set the soaked earth steaming fragrantly with its heat. Odors of hemlock and wet earth mingled with odors of toast and fried fish.

"Um-m! Smell it all!" I said. "What a lot we should miss if we didn't eat in the kitchen!"

"Or cook in the dining-room — which?"

"And hear that song sparrow! Does n't it sound as if the rain had washed his song a little cleaner and clearer?"

There followed the wonderful afterlight that a short, drenching rain leaves behind it — a hush of light, deeply pervasive and friendly. The sunshine slanted across the gleaming wet rocks in the river, lit up the rain-darkened trunks of the hemlocks, glinted on the low-hanging leaves, and flashed through the dripping edges of sagging fern fronds. As twilight came on, we canoed across to the side of the river where the road lay — the other side was steep and pathless woods — and walked down to the nearest farmhouse to buy eggs for the morning. Back again by the light of a low-hung moon, and across the dim water to our own island and the embers of our fire.

"Oh, Jonathan! We never asked them what time it was!" I said. "I meant to — for your sake — I thought you'd sleep better if you knew."

"Too bad! Probably I should have. I thought of it, of course, but was afraid that if I asked it would spoil your day."

"It would take something pretty bad to spoil a day like this one," I said.

Two days later the weather turned still and warm, the bass refused to bite, and even the sunfish lay, shy or wary or indifferent, in their shallow, sunny pools, so we resolved to walk down the river to the post-office, four miles away, for possible mail. As we sat on the steps of the little store, looking it over, — "Here's news," said Jonathan; "Jack and Molly say they 'll run up if we want them, day after to-morrow — up on the morning train, and back on the evening."

"Good! Tell them to come along."

"No — it's to-morrow — letter's been here since yesterday. I'll telegraph."

As we tramped home we planned the day. "We'll meet them and all walk up together," said Jonathan.

"We'd better catch some bass and leave them all hooked in a pool, ready for them to pull out," I added; "otherwise they may not catch any. And maybe you'd better meet them and I'll have dinner ready when you get back."

"Nonsense! You come, and we'll all get dinner when we get back. That's what they're coming for — to see the whole thing."

"But if it's late — they've got to get back for that down train."

"Well — time enough."

"Oh, Jonathan! What about catching that train?"

"They'll have watches — watches that go."

"But what about our meeting them? The train arrives at 10.15, they said. What does 10.15 look like in the sky, I wonder!"

"Or rather, what does 8.45 look like? It takes an hour and a half to get there, counting crossing the river."

"Yes — dear me! Well, Jonathan, we'll just have to get up early and go, and then wait."

"Or else take our watch to the farmhouse and set it."

"Jonathan, I will not! I'd rather start at daylight."

Which was very nearly what we did. The morning opened with a sun obscured, and I felt sure it was stealing a march on us and

would suddenly burst out upon us from a noonday sky. We breakfasted hastily, ferried across to shore, and set a swinging pace down the road. As we walked, the sun burned through the mist, and our shadows came out, dim, long things, striding with the exaggerated gait that shadows have, over the grassy banks to our right.

"I think," said Jonathan, "it may be as late as seven o'clock, but perhaps it's only six."

When we reached the station, the official clock registered 8.30. We strolled over to the store-and-post-office and got more letters — one from Molly and Jack saying thank you they'd come. "They don't entirely understand our mail system up here," said Jonathan. We got some ginger-cookies and some milk and had a second breakfast, and finally wandered back to the station to wait for the train. It came, bearing the expected two, and much friendliness. "Get our letter? There, Jack! He said you wouldn't, but I said you would. I made him send it . . . four miles to walk? What fun!"

It was fun, indeed, and all went well until

after dinner, when Jack — saying, "Well, maybe we'd better be starting back for that train" — drew out his watch. He opened it, muttered something, put it to his ear, then began to wind it rapidly. He wound and wound. We all laughed.

"Looks as if you had n't remembered to wind it last night," said Jonathan, glancing at me.

"I have n't done that in months, hang it! Give me the time, will you, Jonathan?" said Jack.

"Sorry!" Jonathan was smiling genially. "Mine 's run down too. It stopped at twenty-two minutes before five — A.M., I think."

"What luck! And Molly did n't bring hers."

"You told me not to," Molly flicked in.

"So here we are," said Jonathan, "entirely without the time of day."

"But plenty of real time all round us," I said. "Let's use it, and start." I avoided Jonathan's eye.

We reached the station with an hour and ten minutes to spare — bought more ginger-

cookies and more milk. As we sat eating them in the midst of the preternatural calm that marks a country railroad station outside of train times, Molly remarked brightly, —

"Well, I don't see but we got on just as well without a watch, did n't we, Jack? Why do we need watches, anyway? Do *you* see?" she turned to us. "Jack does everything by his watch — eats and breathes and sleeps by it —"

Jack returned, watch in hand — he had been getting railroad time from the telegraph operator. "Want to set yours while you think of it?" he asked Jonathan.

"Sorry — thank you — did n't bring it," said Jonathan.

"By George, man, what'll you do?" Real consternation sounded in Jack's tones.

"Oh, we'll get along somehow," said Jonathan. "You see, we don't have many engagements, except with the bass, and they never meet theirs, anyhow."

When the train had gone, I said, "Jonathan, why did n't you tell them it was my whim?"

"Oh, I just did n't," said Jonathan.

As Jonathan had predicted, we did get along somehow — got along rather well, on the whole. There are, of course, some drawbacks to an unwatched life. You never want to start the next meal till you are hungry, and after that it takes one or two or three hours, as the case may be, to go back to camp and get the meal ready, and by that time you are almost hungrier than you like being. But except for this, and the little matter of meeting trains, it is rather pleasant to break away from the habit of watching the watch, and it was with real regret that, on the last night of our camp, we took our watch to the farmhouse to set it.

"Run down, did it? Guess you forgot to wind it. Well — we do forget things sometimes, all of us do," the farmer's wife said comfortingly as she went to look at the clock. "Twenty minutes to seven, our clock says. It's apt to be fast, so I guess you won't miss any trains. Father he says he'd rather have a clock fast than slow any day, but it don't often get more than ten minutes wrong either way."

And to us, after our two weeks of camp,

ten minutes' error in a clock seemed indeed slight.

"Jonathan," I said, as we walked back along the road, "I hate to go back to clock time. I like real time better."

"You could n't do so many things in a day," said Jonathan.

"No — maybe not."

"But maybe that would n't matter."

"Maybe it would n't," I said.

VIII

The Ways of Griselda

"Of course you don't know what her name is," I said, as we stood examining the sleek little black mare Jonathan had just brought up from the city.

"No. Forgot to ask. Don't believe they'd have known anyway — one of a hundred or so."

"Well, we'll name her again. Dear me — she's rather plain! Probably she's useful."

"Hope so," said Jonathan. Then, stepping back a little, in a slightly grieved tone, "But I don't call her plain. Wait till she's groomed up —"

"It's that droop of her neck — sort of patient — and the way she drops one of her hips — if they are hips."

"But we want a horse to be patient."

"Yes. I don't know that I care about having her *look* so terribly much so as this. I think I'll call her Griselda."

"Now, why Griselda?"

"Why, don't you know? She was that patient creature, with the horrid husband who had to keep trying to see just how patient she was. It's a hateful story — enough to turn any one who brooded on it into a militant suffragette."

"But you can't call a horse Griselda — not for common stable use, you know."

"Call her 'Griz' for short. It does very well."

Jonathan jeered a little, but in the family the name held. Our man Hiram said nothing, but I think in private he called her "Fan" or "Beauty" or "Lady," or some such regulation stable name.

Called by any name, she pleased us, and she *was* patient. She trotted peacefully up hill and down, she did her best at ploughing and haymaking and all the odd jobs that the farm supplied. She stood when we left her, with that same demure, almost overdone droop of the neck that I had first noticed. When I met Jonathan at the station, she stood with her nose against a snorting train, looking as if nothing could rouse her.

"Good little horse you got there," remarked the station agent. "Where'd you find her?"

"Oh, I picked her out of a bunch down in the city," said Jonathan casually. "I did n't think I knew much about horses, but I guess I was in luck this time."

"Guess you know more about horses than you're sayin'." And Jonathan, thus pressed, admitted with suitable reluctance that he *had* now and then been able to detect a good horse by his own observation.

On the way home he openly congratulated himself on his find. "I really was n't sure I knew how to pick out a horse," he remarked, in a glow of retrospective modesty, "but I certainly got a treasure this time."

Griz had been with us about two weeks, and all went well. Then another horse was needed for farm work, and one was sent up — one Kit by name — a big, pleasant, rather stupid brown mare.

"They do say two mares don't git on so well together as a mare 'n a horse," remarked Hiram.

"But these are both such quiet creatures,"

I protested, to which Hiram made no answer. Hiram seldom made an answer unless fairly cornered into it.

For two or three days after the new arrival nothing happened, so far as we knew, except that Griz always laid her ears back, and looked queer about her under lip, whenever Kit was led in or out of the stall next her, while Kit always huddled up close to her manger whenever Griz was led past her heels. Once or twice Griz slipped her halter in the stall, and Hiram said there was a place on Kit that looked as if she had been kicked, but when we scrutinized Griz, neck a-droop and eyes a-blink, we found it hard to think ill of her. Besides, Jonathan was now fairly committed to the opinion that he had "got a treasure this time." "Kit may have hurt herself lying down," he suggested, and again Hiram made no answer.

Then one night, sometime during the very small, very dark, and very sleepy hours, we were awakened by awful sounds. "What is it? What *is* it?" I gasped.

Crash! Bang! Boom! The trampling of hoofs! — heavy, hollow pounding! — the

tearing and splintering of wood! — all coming from the barn, though loud enough, indeed, to have come from the next room.

Jonathan was up in an instant muttering, "Where are my rubber boots? — and my coat?"

"Jonathan! *what* a combination!"

But he was gone, and I heard the snap of the lantern and the slam of the back door almost before the rocking-chair in the sitting-room that he had hit — and talked to — had stopped rocking. Then I heard him calling outside Hiram's window and then he ran past our window, out to the barn. I wished he had waited for Hiram, but I had an undercurrent of pleasure in hearing him run. Jonathan's theory is that there is never any hurry, and now and then I like to have this notion jolted up a little.

Meanwhile the awful sounds had ceased. There was the rumble of the stable door, a pause, and Jonathan's voice in conversational tones. Next came the flashing of Hiram's lantern, and the *tromp, tromp, tromp,* in much quicker tempo than usual, of Hiram's heavy boots. Hiram's theory was a

good deal like Jonathan's, so this also gave me pleasure. Finally, there came the flash of another lantern, and I recognized the quick, short step of Mrs. Hiram. I smiled to myself, picturing the meeting between her and Jonathan, for I knew just how Jonathan was costumed. In two minutes I heard her steps repassing, and in five minutes Jonathan returned. He was chuckling quietly.

"I guess Griz got all she needed — did n't know either of 'em had so much spunk in 'em."

"What happened?"

"Don't know, exactly, but when I opened that door, there was Griz, just inside, no halter on, head down, meek as Moses, as far away from Kit's heels as she could get—she's got the mark of them on her leg and her flank."

"Is she hurt? — or Kit?"

"No, not so far as we can see, not to amount to anything — except maybe Griz's feelings."

"And what about Mrs. Hiram's feelings?"

Jonathan laughed aloud. "I was inside with Kit, and she called out to know if she could help."

"And what did you say?"

"I said, 'Not on your life.' "

"So that was why she came back. Did you really say, 'Not on your life,' or did you only imply it in your tone, while you actually said, 'No, thank you very much'?"

"I really said it. At least, I don't remember conversations the way you do, but I did n't feel a bit like thanking anybody, and I don't believe I did."

"Well, I wish I'd heard you. One misses a good deal —"

"You can see the stable to-morrow. That 'll keep. They must have had a time of it! The walls are marked and splintered as high as I can reach. And I don't believe Kit'll cringe when Griz passes her any more."

"Of course you remember Hiram *said* two mares did n't usually get on very well, and even when they're chosen by a good judge of horses —"

After that the two did get along peaceably enough, and Jonathan assured me that all horses had these little affairs. One day we drove over to the main street of the village on an errand.

"Will she stand?" I questioned.

"Better hitch her, perhaps," said Jonathan, getting out the rope. He snapped it into her bit-ring, then threw the other end around a post and started to make a half-hitch. But as he drew up the rope it was suddenly jerked out of his hand. He looked up and saw Griselda's patient head waving high above him on the end of an erect and rebellious neck, the hitch-rope waggling in loops and spirals in the air, and the whole outfit backing away from him with speed and decision. He was so astonished that he did nothing, and in a moment Griz had stopped backing and stood still, her head sagging gently, the rope dangling.

"Well — I'll — be —" I did n't try to remember just what Jonathan said he would be, because it does n't really matter. We both stared at Griz as if we had never seen her before. Griz looked at nothing in particular, she blinked long lashes over drowsy, dark eyes, and sagged one hip.

"She's trying to make believe she did n't do it — but she did," I said.

"Something must have startled her," said

Jonathan, peering up and down the deserted street. Two roosters were crowing antiphonally in near-by yards, and a dog was barking somewhere far off.

"What?" I said.

"You never can tell, with a horse."

"No, apparently not," I said, smiling to myself; and I added hastily, as I saw Jonathan go forward to her head, "*Don't* try it again, please! I'll stay by her while you go in. *Please!*" For I had detected on Jonathan's face a look that I very well knew. It was the same expression he had worn that Sunday he led the calf to pasture. He made no answer, but stood examining the hitch-rope.

"No use," he said, quietly releasing it and tossing its coil into the carriage, "It's too rotten. If it snapped, she'd be ruined."

I breathed freer. I privately hoped that all the hitch-ropes at the farm were rotten.

"Griz stands perfectly well without hitching," I said as we drove home, "Why do you force an issue?"

"I did n't. She did. She's beaten me. If I don't hitch her now, she'll know she's master."

"Oh, dear!" I sighed. "Let her *be* master! Where's the harm? It's just your vanity."

"Perhaps so," said Jonathan.

When he agrees with me like that I know it's hopeless.

The next night he wheeled in at the big gate bearing about his shoulders a coil of heavy rope.

"It looks like a ship's cable," I said.

"Yes," he responded, leaning his bicycle against his side, and swinging the coil over his head. "I want it for mooring purposes. Think it'll moor Griz?"

"Jonathan!" I exclaimed, "you won't!"

"Watch me," said Jonathan, and he proceeded to explain to me the working of the tackle.

One end had a ring in it, and as nearly as I remember, the plan was to put the rope around her body, under what would be her arm-pits if she had arm-pits, — horses' joints are never called what one would expect, of course, — run the end through the ring, then forward between her legs and through the bit-ring.

"Then, when she sets back, it cuts her in two," he concluded cheerfully.

"But you don't *want* her in two," I protested.

"She won't set back," he responded; "at least, not more than once. To-morrow's Sunday; I'll have to hitch her at church."

I hoped it would rain, so we need n't go, but we were having a drought and the morning dawned cloudless. We reached the church just on the last stroke of the bell. The women were all within; the men and boys lounging in the vestibule were turning reluctant feet to follow them.

"You go right in," said Jonathan, "I'll be in soon."

I turned to protest, but he was already driving round to the side, and a hush had fallen over the congregation within that made it embarrassing to call. Besides, one of the deacons stood holding open the door for me.

I slipped into a pew near the back, with the apologetic feeling one often has in an old country church — a feeling that one is making the ghosts move along a little. They did move, of course, — probably ghosts are al-

ways polite when one really meets them, — and I sat down. Indeed, I was thinking very little of ghosts that day, or of the minister either. My ears were cocked to catch and interpret all the noises that came in through the open windows on my left. My eyes wandered in that direction, too, though the clear panes revealed nothing more exciting than flickering maple leaves and a sky filmed over by veils of cloud.

The moralists tell us that what we get out of any experience depends upon what we bring to it. What I brought to it that morning was a mind agog, attuned to receive these expected outside sounds. To all such sounds the service within was merely a background — a background which did n't know its place, since it kept pushing itself more or less importunately into the foreground. I sat there, of course, with perfect propriety of demeanor, but my reactions were something like this: —

Hymn 912 . . . seven stanzas! horrors! oh! *omit the 3d, 5th, and 6th* — well, I should hope so! . . . I can't hear a thing while this is going on! . . . He has n't come in yet!

Scripture reading for to-day — why can't he give us the passage and let us read it for ourselves? — well, his voice is rather high and uneven, I think I could make out Jonathan's through the loopholes in it. . . . There! What was that, I wonder! Sounded like shouting, — oh, why can't he talk softly! *Let us unite in prayer.* Ah! now we'll have a long, quiet time, anyway! . . . if only he would n't pray quite so loud! Why pray aloud at all, anyway? I like the Quaker way best: a good long strip of silence, where your thoughts can wash around in any fashion that — There! No — yes — no — it's just people going by on the road. . . . Maybe he's in the back of the church now, waiting for the close of the prayer. Seems as if I had to look. . . . Well, he is n't. . . . *For thy name's sake, amen.*

And then the collection, with an organ voluntary the while — now why an organ voluntary? Why not leave people to their thoughts some of the time?

And at last, the sermon: — *The text to which I wish to call your attention this morning* — my attention, forsooth! My attention was otherwise occupied. Ah! A puff of

warm, sweet air from behind me, and the soft, padding noise of the swinging doors, apprised me of an incomer. A cautious tread in the aisle — I moved along a little to make room.

In a city church probably I should have thrown propriety to the winds and had the gist of the story out of him at once, but in a country church there are always such listening spaces, — the very pew-backs and cushions seem attentive, the hymnals creak in their racks, and the little stools cry out nervously when one barely touches them. It was too much for me. I was coerced into an outer semblance of decorum. However, I snatched a hasty glance at Jonathan's face. It was quite red and hot-looking, but calm, very calm, and I judged it to be the calm, not of defeat nor yet of settled militancy, but of triumph. I even thought I detected the flicker of a grin, — the mere atmospheric suggestion of a grin, — as if he felt the urgent if furtive appeal in my glance. At any rate, Jonathan was all right, that was clear. And as to Griz — whether she was still one mare or two half-mares — it did n't so much matter.

And now for the sermon! I gathered myself to attend.

As we stood up for the last hymn, I whispered, "How did it go?"

"All right. She's hitched," was the answer.

After church there was the usual stir of sociability, and when I emerged into the glare of the church steps, I saw Jonathan driving slowly around from the rear. Griz walked meekly, her head sagged, her eyes blinked.

"Good quiet little horse you've got there," said a deacon over my shoulder; "don't get restless standing, the way some horses do."

"Yes, she's very quiet," I said.

I got in, and at last, as we drove off, the flood-gates of my impatience broke: —

"Well?" I said, — "well?"

"Well —" said Jonathan.

"*Well? Tell* me about it!"

"I've told you. I hitched her."

"How did you hitch her?"

"Just the way I said I would."

"Did n't she mind?"

"Don't know."

"Did she make a fuss?"

"Not much."

"What do you mean by much?"

"Oh, she set back a little."

"Do any harm?"

"No."

"Hurt herself?"

"Guess not."

"Jonathan, you drive me distracted — you have no more sense for a story —"

"But there was nothing in particular —"

"Now, Jonathan, if there was nothing in particular, *why* did n't you get into church till the sermon was begun, and why were you so red and hot?"

Jonathan smiled indulgently. "Why, of course, she did n't care about being hitched. I thought you knew that. But it was perfectly easy."

And that was about all I could extract by the most artful questions. I took my revenge by telling Jonathan the deacon's compliment to Griz. "He said she did n't get restless standing, the way so many horses did. I thought of mentioning that you were a rather good judge of horses, in an amateur way, but then I thought it might seem like boasting, so I did n't."

After that, of course, I did n't really deserve to hear the whole story, but the next night I happened to be in the hammock while Jonathan was talking to a neighbor at the front gate, and he was relating the incident with detail enough to have satisfied the most hungry gossip. Only thus did I learn that Bill Howard, who had wound the rope twice round the post to give himself a little leeway, was drawn right up to the post when she set back; that they had been afraid the headstall would tear off; that they had been rather nervous about the post, and other such little points, which I had not been clever enough to elicit by my questions.

Now, why? Probably a man likes to tell a story when he likes to tell it. I find myself wondering how much Odysseus told Penelope about his adventures when she got him to herself for a good talk. Is it significant that his really long story was told to the King of the Phæacians?

As to Griz: — it would perhaps not be worth while to recount her subsequent history. It was a curious one, consisting of long stretches of continuous and ostentatious

meekness, broken by sudden flare-ups which, after their occurrence, always seemed incredible. She never again "set back" when Jonathan was the one to hitch her, but this was a concession made to him personally, and had no effect on her general habits. We talked of changing her name, but could never manage it. We thought of selling her, but she was too valuable — most of the time. And when we finally parted from her our relief was deeply tinged with regret.

I have sometimes wondered whether such flare-ups were not the natural and necessary means of recuperation from such depths of meekness. I have even wondered whether the original Griselda may not have — but this is not a dissertation on early Italian poetry, nor on the nature of women.

IX

A Rowboat Pilgrimage

We were glad that the plan of the rowboat cruise dawned upon us almost a year before it came to pass. We were the gainers by just that rich length of expectancy.

For the joy that one gets from any cherished plan is always threefold: there is the joy of looking forward, the joy of the very doing, and the joy of remembering. They are all good, but only the last is eternal. The doing is hedged between limits, and its pleasures are often confused, overlaid with alien or accidental impressions. The joy of the forward look is pure and keen, but its bounds, too, are set. It begins at the moment when the first ray of the plan-idea dawns on one's mind, and it ends with the day of fulfillment. If the dawn begins long before the day, so much the better.

It was early fall, and we had come in from a day by the river, where we had tramped

miles up, to one of its infrequent bridges, and miles down on the other bank. Now we sat before the fire, talking it over.

"If we only had a boat!" I said.

"Boat! What do you want a boat for? You would n't want to sit in a boat all day."

"Who said I would? But I want to get into it, and float off, and get out again somewhere else. That's my idea of a boat."

"Oh, of course, a boat would be handy —"

"Handy! You talk as if it was a button-hook!"

"Well?"

"Well — of course it *is* handy — as you call it — but a boat means such a lot of things — adventure, romance. When you're in a boat — a little boat — anything might happen."

"Yes," said Jonathan, drawing the logs together, "that's just the way your family feels about it when you're young."

Then we both laughed, and there was a reminiscent pause.

"What became of your boat?" I asked finally.

"Sold. You kept yours."

"Yes. It's in the cellar, there at Nantucket. I could have it sent on."

"Cost as much as to buy a new one."

"A new one would n't be as good." I bristled a little. Any one who has owned a boat is very sensitive about its virtues.

"How big?"

"How should I know? A little boat — maybe twelve feet."

"Two oars?"

"Four."

"Round bottom?"

"Yes. She'd ride anything."

"Well" — Jonathan suddenly expanded — "here's an idea now! How would you like to have it sent on to the mainland, and then row it the rest of the way — along the Rhode Island and Connecticut shores?"

I sat straight up. "Jonathan! Let's do it now!"

Jonathan chuckled. "My! What a hurry she's in!"

"Well, let's!"

"We could n't. The boat will have to be overhauled first."

"Oh, dear! I suppose so."

"We could do it next spring, and go up the trout streams."

"Think of that!" I murmured.

"Or in September and get the shore hunting — the salt marshes."

"Oh, which? — which?" Already I was following our course along curving beaches and amongst the yellow marshlands. But Jonathan's mind was working on more practical details.

"Twelve feet, you said?"

"About that."

"Pretty close stowing for our dunnage — still — let's see — two guns —"

"Or the rods, if we went in the spring."

"And rubber coats, and blankets —"

"Jonathan! Should we camp?"

"Might have to."

"Let's, anyway."

"How does that coast-line run? Where's a map?"

All we had were some railroad maps and an old school geography — just enough to tantalize us — but we fell upon them eagerly. It is curious what a change comes over these dumb bits of colored paper at such times.

Every curve of the shore, every bay and headland came to life and spoke to us — called to us.

We decided on the September plan, and for the next eleven months our casual talk was starred with inapropos remarks like these: —

"Jonathan, I know we shall forget a can-opener."

"Better write it down while you think of it. And have you put down a hatchet?"

"The camera! It is n't on the list!"

"Hang it! Those charts have n't come yet!"

"What can we take to look respectable in when we go ashore?"

Meanwhile the little boat was stirred out of its long sleep in the cellar, overhauled, and painted, and shipped to a port up in Narragansett Bay. And on the last day of August we found ourselves walking down through the little town. Following the instructions of wondering small boys, we came to a gate in a board fence, opened it and let ourselves into a typical New England seaport scene — a tiny garden, ablaze with sunshine and gorgeous with the yellows and lavenders of fall

flowers, and a narrow brick path, under a grape-vine arch leading down to the sand and the wharf and the sparkling blue waters of the bay. As we passed down through the garden, we saw a little boat, bottom up, dazzling white in the sun.

"There it is!" I said, with a surge of reminiscent affection.

"That little thing!" said Jonathan. "I thought you said twelve feet."

"Well, is n't it? Anyway, I said *about.* And it's big enough."

He was spanning its length with his hands.

"Eleven foot six. Oh, I suppose she'll do. My boat was fourteen."

"Now, don't be so patronizing about your boat. Wait till you see how mine behaves."

He dropped the discussion and got her launched. Is there anything prettier than a pretty boat floating beside a dock!

The next morning when we came down we found her half full of water. "She'll be all right now she's soaked up," said Jonathan, and we baled her dry and went off to get our stuff.

I delayed to buy provisions, and when I

came back I found Jonathan standing on the float surrounded by plunder of all sorts. He answered my hail rather solemnly.

"See here! When this stuff's all stowed, where are we going to sit? That's what's worrying me."

"Why, won't it go in?"

"Go! It would n't go in two boats."

I came down the plank. "Well, let's eliminate."

We eliminated. We took out extra shoes and coats and "town clothes," we cut down as far as we dared, and expressed a big bundle home. The rest we got into two sailor's dunnage bags, one waterproof, the other nearly so, and one big water-tight metal box. Then there were the guns, and the provisions, and the charts in a long tin tube, and there was a lantern — a clumsy thing, which we lashed to a seat. It was always in the way and proved of very little use, but we thought we ought to take it.

While we worked, some loungers gathered on the wharf above and watched us with that tolerant curiosity that loungers know so well how to assume. As we got in and took up our

oars, one of them called out, "Now, if you only had a little motor there in the stern, you'd be all right."

"Don't want one," said Jonathan.

"What? Why not?"

"Go too fast."

"Eh? What say?"

"Go — too — fast."

"He heard you," I said, "but he can't believe you really said it."

The oars fell into unison, there was the dip of their blades, the grating chunk of the rowlocks — *dip-ke-chunk*, *dip-ke-chunk*. As we fell into our stroke the little boat began to respond, the water swished at her bows and gurgled under her stern. The wharf fell away behind us, the houses back of it came into sight, then the wooded hills behind. The whole town began to draw together, with its church steeples as its centers.

"She does go!" remarked Jonathan.

"I told you! Look at us now! Look at that buoy!"

Dip-ke-chunk, *dip-ke-chunk*—the red buoy swept by us and dropped into the blue background of dancing waves.

"Are we really off? Is it really happening?" I said joyously.

"Do you like it?" said Jonathan over his shoulder.

"No. Do you?" To such unwisdom of speech do people come when they are happy.

But there were circumstances to steady us.

"What I'm wondering," said Jonathan, "is, what's going to happen next — when we get out there." He tilted his head toward the open bay, broad and windy, ahead of us. "There's some pretty interesting water out there beyond this lee."

"Oh, she'll take it all right. It's no worse than Nantucket water. It could n't be. You'll see."

We did see. In half an hour we were in the middle of upper Narragansett Bay, trying to make a diagonal across it to the southwest, while the long rollers came in steadily from the south, broken by a nasty chop of peaked, whitecapped waves. We rowed carefully, our heads over our right shoulders, watching each wave as it came on, with broken comments: —

"That's a good one coming — bring her up now — there — all right, now let her off again — hold her so — there's another coming — see? — that big one, the fifth, the fourth, away — row, now — we beat it — there it goes off astern — see it break! Here's another — look out for your oar — we can't afford to miss a stroke — oh, me! Did that wet you too? My right shoulder is soaked — my left is n't — now it is!"

But half an hour of this sort of thing brought about two results — confidence in the little boat, which rode well in spite of her load, and confidence in each other's rowing. We found that the four oars worked together, our early training told, and we instinctively did the same things in each of the varied emergencies created by wind and wave. There was no need for orders, and our talk died down to an exclamation now and then at some especially big wave, or a laugh as one of us got a drenching from the white top of a foaming crest.

It was not an easy day, that first one. . . . It seems, sometimes, as if there were little imps of malignity that hovered over one

at the beginning of an undertaking — little brownies, using all their charms to try to turn one back, discouraged. If there be such, they had a good time with us that long afternoon. First they had said that we should n't load our boat. Then they sent us rough water. Then they set the boat a-leak.

For leak it did. The soaking over night had done no good. It had, indeed, been "thoroughly overhauled" and pronounced seaworthy, but there was the water, too much to be accounted for as spray, swashing over the bottom boards, growing undeniably and most uncomfortably deeper. The imps made no offer to bale for us, so we had to do it ourselves, losing the much-needed power at the oars, while one of us set to work at the dip-and-toss, dip-and-toss motion so familiar to any one who has kept company with a small boat.

"I wish my mother could see me now —" hummed Jonathan.

"I would n't wish that."

"Why not?"

"What would they all think of us if they could see us this minute?"

"Just what they have thought for a long time."

I laughed. "How true that is, teacher!" I said.

Finding us still cheerful, the imps tried again.

"Jonathan — do you know — I do believe — my rowlock socket is working loose."

He cast a quick look over his shoulder without breaking stroke. Then he said a few words, explicit and powerful, about the man who had "overhauled" the boat. "He ought to be put out in it, in a sea like this, and left to row himself home."

"Yes, of course, but instead, here we are. It won't last half an hour longer."

It did not last ten minutes. There it hung, one screw pulled loose, the other barely holding.

"Take my knife — you can get it out of my hip pocket — and try to set up that screw with the big blade."

I did so, and pulled a few strokes. Then — "It's come out again. It's no use."

"We make blamed poor headway with one pair of oars," said Jonathan.

He meditated.

"Where are the screw-eyes?" he said after a moment.

"Oh, good for you! They're in the metal box. I'll get them."

I drew in my useless oars, turned about and cautiously wriggled up into the bow seat.

"Look out for yourself! Don't bullfrog out over the bow. I can't hold her any steadier than this."

"Oh, I'm all right."

With one hand I gripped the gunwale, with the other I felt down into the box and finally fished out the required treasures. I worked my way back into my own seat and tried a screw-eye in the empty, rusted-out hole.

"Does it bite?

"I don't know about biting, but it's going in beautifully — now it goes hard."

"Perhaps I can give it a turn."

"Perhaps you can't! Don't you stop rowing. If this boat was n't held steady, she'd — I don't know what she would n't do."

"If you stick something through the eye you can turn it."

"Yes. I'll find something, Here's the can-

opener. Grand! There! It's solid. Now I'll do the other one the same way. Hurrah for the screw-eyes!"

"You thought of bringing them," said Jonathan magnanimously.

"You thought of using them," said I, not to be outdone.

And so again the imps were foiled. But they hung over us, they slapped us with spray, they tossed the whitecaps, jeering, at our heads, over our shoulders, into our laps. They put up the tides to tricks of eddies and back-currents, so that they hindered instead of helping, as by calculation they should have done. They laid invisible hands on our oars and dragged them down, or held them up as the wave raced by, so that we missed a stroke. Once, in the lee of an island, we paused to rest and unroll our chart and get our bearings, while the smooth rise and fall of the ground swell was all there was to remind us of the riot of water just outside. Then we were off again, and the imps had us. They were busy, those imps, all that long, windy, wave-tossed, wonderful day.

For it was wonderful, and the imps were indeed frustrate, wholly frustrate. We pulled toward the quiet harbor that evening with aching muscles, hair and clothes matted with salt water, but spirits undaunted. Hungry, too, for we had not been able to do more than munch a few ship's biscuit while we rowed. Wind, tide, waves, all against us, boat leaking, oars disabled — and still — "Is n't it great!" we said, "great — great!"

Dusk was closing in and lights began to blink along the western shore. We beached on a sandy point and asked our way, — where could we put up for the night? Children, barelegged, waded out around the boat, looking at us and our funny, laden craft, with curious eyes. Yes, they said, there was an inn, farther up the harbor, where we saw those lights — ten minutes' row, perhaps. We pulled off again, stiffly.

"Tired?" said Jonathan. "I'll take her in."

"Indeed you won't! Of course I'm tired, but I've got to do something to keep warm. And I want to get in. I want supper. They'll all be in bed if we don't hurry."

Our tired muscles lent themselves mechanically to their work and the boat slid across the quiet waters of the moonlit harbor. The town lights grew bigger, wharves loomed above us, and soon we were gliding along under their shadow. The eddies from our oars went *lap-lap-lapping* off among the great dark spiles and stirred up the keen smell of salt-soaked timbers and seaweed. Blindly groping, we found a rickety ladder, tied our boat and climbed stiffly up, and there we were on our feet again, feeling rather queer and stretchy after seven hours in our cramped quarters.

Half an hour later we were sitting in the warm, clean kitchen of the old inn, and a kindly but mystified hostess was mothering us with eggs and ham and tea and pie and doughnuts and other things that a New England kitchen always contains. While we ate she sat and rocked energetically, questioning us with friendly curiosity and watching us with keen though benevolent eyes.

"Rowed, did you? Jim!" calling back over her shoulder through a half-open door, "did you hear that? These folks have rowed all

the way across the bay this afternoon — yes — rowed. What say? Yes, *she* rowed, too. They say they're goin' on to-morrow, round Judith."

"Say, now," she finally appealed to us in frank perplexity, "what're you doin' it for?"

"We like it," said Jonathan peacefully.

"Like it, do you? Well, now, if that don't beat all! Say — you know? I would n't do that, what you're doin', not if you paid me. Have another cup o' tea, do."

The next morning she bade us good-bye with the air of entrusting us to that Providence which is known to have a special care for children and fools.

In fact, through all the varying experiences of our cruise, one thing never varied. That was, the expression on the faces of the people we met. Wind and water and coast and birds all greeted us differently with each new day, but no matter now many new faces we met, we found in them always the same look — a look at once friendly and quizzical, the look one casts upon nice children for whose antics one is not responsible, the look one casts upon very small dogs. Why? Is it so odd a thing

to like to row a little boat? If it had been a yacht, now, or even a motor-boat, the expression would have been different. Apparently the oars were what did it.

On that particular morning, word of our doings must have got abroad, for as we stepped out on the brick sidewalk of the shady main street a little crowd was waiting for us. It was a funny procession: — Jonathan first, with the guns and the water-jug, then a boy with a wheelbarrow, on which were piled the two dunnage bags, the metal box, the lantern, the axe, the chart tube, and a few other things. An old man and some boys followed curiously, then I came, with two big baking-powder cans, very gorgeous because the red paper was not yet off them, full of provisions pressed on us by our friendly hostess. Tagging behind me, came an old woman, a big girl, and a half-dozen children. It was the kind of escort that usually attends the hand-organ and monkey on their infrequent visits.

We loaded up the boat and pulled off, a little stiff but fairly fit after all. The group waved us off and then stood obviously talk-

ing us over. One of the men called after us, with a sudden inspiration, "Pity ye' hev n't got a *motor* in there!"

Though we did n't want to be a motor-boat, we were not above receiving courtesies from one, and when the Providence tacitly invoked by our hostess sent one chugging along up to us, with the proposal to take us in tow, we accepted with great contentment. The morning was not half over when we made our next landing, and looked up the captain who was to tow us "around Judith."

For in the matter of Point Judith our friends and advisers had been unanimously firm. There should be a limit, they said, even to the foolishness of a holiday plan. With a light boat, we might have braved their disapproval, but loaded as we were, we decided to be prudent.

"I'd hate to lose the guns," said Jonathan.

"Yes, and the camera," I added.

So we accepted the offer of a good friend's knockabout, and sailed around the dreaded Point with our little boat tailing behind at the end of her rope. We saw no water that we could not have met in her, but, as our

friends did not fail to point out, that proved nothing whatever.

At Stonington we were left once more to our little boat and our four oars, and there we pulled her up and caulked her.

Strange, how we are always trying to avoid mishaps, and yet when they come we are so often glad of them! A leaky boat had not been in our plans, but if we could change that first wild row across the big bay, if we could cut out that leakiness, that puddling bottom, the difficult shifts of baling and rowing, would we? We would not. Again, as we look back over the days of our cruise, we could ill spare those hours of labor on the hot stretch of sunny beach between the wharves, where we bent half-blinded over the dazzling white boat, our spirits irritated, our fingers aching as they worked at the *push-push-push* of the cotton waste between the strakes. We said hard words of the man who thought he had put our boat in order for us, and yet — if we could cut out those hours of grumbling toil, would we? We would not. For one thing, we should perhaps have missed the precious word of advice given us by a man who sat and

watched us. He recommended us to put a little motor in the stern. He pointed out to us that rowing was pretty hard work. We said we liked it. His face wore the expression I have already described.

We launched her again at dusk. Next morning Jonathan was a moment ahead of me on the wharf.

"Any water in her?" I called, following hard.

"Dry as a bone," he shouted back, exultant; but as I came up he added, with his usual conservatism, "of course we can't tell what she may do when she's loaded."

But our work held. For the rest of the trip we had a dry boat, except for what came in over the sides.

Now that we were in the home State, we got out our guns and hugged the shore closely, on the lookout for plover. We drifted sometimes, while we studied our maps for the location of the salt marshes. If we were lucky, we had broiled birds for luncheon or supper; if we were not, we had tinned stuff, which is distinctly inferior. When we spent the night at an inn, we breakfasted there, but most of our

meals were eaten along the shore, or, best of all, on some island.

"Can we find an island for lunch to-day, do you suppose?" I usually asked, as we dipped our oars in the morning.

"Do you have to have an island for lunch?"

"I love an island!" choosing to ignore the jest. "That's one of the best things about a boat — that it takes you to islands."

"Now, why an island?"

"You know as well as I do. An island means — oh, it means remoteness, it means quiet — possession; while you're on it, it's yours — you don't have every passer-by looking over your shoulder — you have a little world all to yourself."

I could feel Jonathan's indulgent smile through the back of his head as he rowed.

"Well, you know yourself," I argued. "Even a tiny bit of stone and earth, with moss on it, and a flower, out in the middle of a brook, looks different, somehow, from the same things on the bank. It *is* different — it's an island."

And so we sought islands — sometimes little ones, all rocks, too little even to have

collected driftwood for a fire, too little to have grown anything but wisps of beach-grass, low enough to be covered, perhaps, by the highest tides. Sometimes it was a larger island, big enough to have bushes on it, and beaches round its edges. One of these we remember as best of all. It lay a mile off shore, a long island, rocky at its ocean end and at its land end running out to a long slim line of curving beach. In the middle it rose to a plateau, thick-set with grass and goldenrod and bay bushes, from which floated the gay, sweet voices of song sparrows. Ah! There was an island for you! And we made a fire of driftwood, and cooked our luncheon, and lay back on the sand and drowsed, while the sea-gulls, millions of them, circled curiously over our heads, mewing and screaming as they dived and swooped, and behind us the notes of the song sparrows rose sweet.

If we had had water enough in our jug, we should have camped there. We rowed away at last, slowly, loving it, and in our thoughts we still possess it. As it dropped astern I pulled in my oars and stood up to take its

picture — no easy task, with the boat mounting and plunging among the swells. But I have my picture, its horizon line at a noticeable slant, reminiscent of my unsteady balance. It means little to other people, but to us it means the sweetness of sunshine and wind and water, the sweetness of grass and bird-notes, all breathed over by the spirit of solitude.

Then it melted away — our island — into the waste of waters, and we turned to look toward the misty headlands beyond our bow. Where the marshlands were, we followed them closely, but where the shore was rocky, or, worse still, built up with summer cottages, we often made a straight course from headland to headland, keeping well out, often a mile or two, to avoid tide eddies. We liked the feeling of being far out, the shore a dark blue, the cottages little dots. But we liked it, too, when the headland before us grew large, its rocks and bushes stood out, and we could see the white rip off its point — a rip to be taken with some caution if we hoped to keep our cargo dry. And then, the rip passed, if the bay beyond curved in quiet and unin-

habited, how we loved to turn and pull along close to shore, watching its beaches and sand-cliffs draw smoothly away beside our stern, or, best of all, pulling about and running in till our bow grated and we jumped to the wet beach and ran up the cliff to look about. Such moments bring in a peculiar way the thrill of discovery. It is one thing to go along a coast by land, and learn its ways so. It is a good thing. But it is quite another to fare over its waters and turn in upon it from without, surprising its secrets as from another world.

But to do this, your boat must be a little one. As soon as you have a real keel, the case is altered. For a keel demands a special landing-place — a wharf — and a wharf means human habitation, and then — where is your thrill of discovery? Ah, no! — a little boat! And you can land anywhere, among rocks or in sandy shallows; you can explore the tide creeks and marshes and the little rivers; you can beach wherever you like, wherever the rippling waves themselves can go. A little boat for romance!

A little boat, but a long cruise, as long as may be. To be sure, a boat and a bit of water

anywhere is good. Even an errand across the pond and back may be a joy. But if you can, now and then, free yourself from the there-and-back habit, the reward is great. The joy of pilgrimage — of going, not there and back, but on, and on, and yet on — is a joy by itself. The thought that each night brings sleep in a new and unforeseen spot, with a new journey on the morrow, gives special flavor to the journeying.

Not the least among the pleasures of the cruise were the night-camps. When the shore looked inviting, and harborage at an inn seemed doubtful, we pulled our boat above tide-water, turned her over and tilted her up on her side for a wind-break, and there we spent the night. The half-emptied dunnage bags were our pillows, the sand was our bed. Sand, to sleep on, is harder than one might suppose, but it is better than earth in being easily scooped out to suit one's needs. Indeed, even on a pneumatic mattress, I should hardly have slept much that first night. It was a new experience. The great world of waters was so close that it seemed, all night long, like a wonderful but ever importunate pres-

ence. The wind blew that night, too, and there was a low-scudding rack, and a half-smothered moon. As we rolled ourselves up in our blankets and rubber sheets and settled down, I looked out over the restless water.

"The bay seems very full to-night — brimming," I said.

"Not brimming over, though," said Jonathan.

"I should hope not! But it does seem to me there are very few inches between it and our feet."

"And the tide is still rising, of course," said Jonathan, by way of comfort.

"Jonathan, I know just where high-tide mark is, and we're fully twelve inches above it."

Silence.

"Are n't we?"

"Oh, was that a question?" murmured Jonathan. "Why, yes, I think we are at least that."

"Of course, there are extra high tides sometimes."

Silence.

"Jonathan, do you know when they come?"

"Not exactly."

"Well, I don't care. I love it, anyway. Only it seems so much bigger and colder at night, the water does."

At last I drowsed, waking now and then to raise my head and just glance down at those waves — they certainly sounded as if they were lapping the sand close by my ear. No, there they were, quite within bounds, fully twenty feet away from my toes. Of course it was all right. I slept again, and dreamed that the tide rose and rose; the waves ran merrily up the beach, ran up on both sides of us, closed in behind us. We were lying on a little sand island, and the waves nibbled at its edges — nibbled and nibbled and nibbled — the island was being nibbled up. This would never do! We must move! And I woke. *Ripple, ripple, swash! ripple, ripple, swash!* went the unconscious waves. As I raised my head I saw the pale beach stretching off under the moon-washed mists of middle night. Reassured, I sank back, and when I waked again the big sun was well above the rim of the waters and all the little waves were dancing

and the wet curves of the beach were gleaming in the new day.

The water was not always restless at night. The next time we camped we found a little harbor within a harbor, a crescent curve of fine white sand ending in a point of rock. In one of its clefts we made our fire and broiled our plover, ranging them on spits of bay so that they hung over the two edges of rock like people looking down into a miniature Grand Cañon. There were nine of them, fat and sputtering, and while they cooked, we made toast and arranged the camp. Then we had supper, and watched the red coals smouldering and the white moonlight filling the world with a radiance that put out the stars and brought the blue back to the sky. The little basin of the bay was quiet as a pool, the air was full of stillness, with now and then the hushed *flip-flip* of a tiny wave that had somehow strayed in from the tumbling crowd outside.

We slept well, but once Jonathan waked me. "Look!" he whispered, "White heron."

I raised my head. There, quite near us in the shallow water, stood a great pale bird,

motionless, on one long, slim leg, his oval body, long neck, head and bill clearly outlined against the bright water beyond. The mirror of the water reflected perfectly the soft outline, making a double creature, one above and one below, with that slim stem of leg between.

I watched him until my neck grew tired. He never moved. Out beyond him, more dim, stood his mate, motionless too. Now and then they called to each other, with queer, harsh talk that made the stillness all the stiller when it closed in again.

When we awoke, they were gone, but we found the heronry that morning on one of the oak-covered knolls that rise like islands out of the heart of the great salt marshes.

All through the cruise, the big winds were with us more than we had expected. They gave us, for the most part, a right good time. For even in the partly protected Sound it is possible to stir up a sea rough enough to keep one busy. Each wave, as it came galloping up, was an antagonist to be dealt with. If we met it successfully, it galloped on, and left

us none the worse for it. If we did not, it meant, perhaps, that its foaming white mane brushed our shoulders, or swept across our laps, or, worse still, drowned our guns. Once, indeed, we were threatened with something a little more serious. We were running down out of the Connecticut River, gliding smoothly over sleek water. It was delicious rowing, and the boat shot along swiftly. As we turned westward, it grew rougher, but we were paying no special heed to this when suddenly I became conscious of something dark over my right shoulder. I turned my head, and found myself looking up into the evil heart of a dull green breaker. I gasped, "Look out!" and dug my oar. Jonathan glanced, pulled, there was a moment of doubt, then the huge dark bulk was shouldering heavily away, off our starboard quarter. It was only the first of its ugly company. Through sheer carelessness, we had run, as it were, into an ambush — one of the worst bits of water on the Sound, where tide and river currents meet and wrangle. All around us were rearing, white-maned breakers, though the impression we got was less of their white manes than of their

dark sides as they rose over us. Our problem was to meet each one fairly, and yet snatch every moment of respite to slant off toward the harborage inside the breakwaters. It took all our strength and all our skill, and all the resources of the good little boat. But we made it, after perhaps half an hour of stiff work. Then we rested, breathed, and went on. We did not talk much about it until we made camp that night. Then, as we sat looking out over the quiet water, I told Jonathan about the shadow over my shoulder.

"It was like seeing a ghost," I said, — "no — more like feeling the hand of an enemy on your shoulder."

"The Black Douglas," suggested Jonathan.

"Yes. Talk about the scientific attitude — you've just got to personify things when they come at you like that. That wave had an expression — an ugly one. I don't wonder the Northmen felt as they did about the sea and the waves. They took it all personally — they had to!"

"Were you frightened?" asked Jonathan.

"No, of course not," I said, almost too promptly. Then I meditated — "I don't

know what you'd call it — but I believe I understand now what people mean when they talk about their hearts going down into their boots."

"Did yours?"

"Why, not exactly — but — well — it certainly did feel suddenly very thick and heavy — as if it had dropped — perhaps an inch or two."

"I believe," said Jonathan gently, "you might almost call that being frightened."

"Yes, perhaps you might. Tell me — were you?"

"I did n't like it — yes, I was anxious — and it made me tired to have been such a fool — the whole thing was absolutely unnecessary, if we'd looked up the charts carefully."

"Or asked a few questions. But you know you hate to ask questions."

"You could have asked them."

"Well, anyway, are n't you glad it happened?"

"Oh, of course; it was an experience."

"Do you want to do it again?"

"No" — he was emphatic — "not with that load."

"Neither do I."

If the winds sometimes wearied us a little, they helped us, too. We can never forget the evening we turned into the Thames River, making for the shelter of a friend's hospitable roof. We had battled most of that day with the diagonal onslaughts of a southeast gale, bringing with it the full swing of the ocean swell. It was easier than a southwester would have been, but that was the best that could be said for it.

We passed the last buoy and turned our bow north. And suddenly, the great waves that had all day kept us on the defensive became our strong helpers. They took us up and swung us forward on our course with great sweeping rushes of motion. The tide was setting in, too, and with that and our oars we were going almost as fast as the waves themselves, so that when one picked us up, it swung us a long way before it left us. We learned to watch for each roller, wait till one came up astern, then pull with all our might so that we went swooping down its long slope, its crest at first just behind our stern, but drawing more and more under us, until it

passed beyond our bow and dropped us in the trough to wait for the next giant. It was like going in a swing, but with the downward rush very long and swift, and the upward rise short and slow. How long it took us to make the two miles to our friend's dock we shall never know. Probably only a few minutes. But it was not an experience in time. We had a sense of being at one with the great primal forces of wind and water, and at one with them, not in their moments of poise, but in their moments of resistless power.

After all, the only drawback to the cruise was that it was over too soon. When, in the quiet afternoon light of the last day, a familiar headland floated into view, my first feeling was one of joy; for beyond that headland, what friendly faces waited for us — faces turned even now, perhaps, toward the east for a first glimpse of our little boat. But hard after this, came a pang of regret — it was over, our water-pilgrimage, and I wanted it to go on.

It was over. And yet, not really over after all. I sometimes think that pleasures ought

to be valued according to whether they are over when they *are* over, or not. "You cannot eat your cake and have it too." True, but that is because it is cake. There are other things which you can eat, and still have. And our rowboat cruise is one of these. It is over, and yet it is not over. It never will be. I can shut my eyes — indeed, I do not need even to shut them — and again I am under the open sky, I am afloat in the sun and the wind, with the waters all around me. I see again the surf-edged curves of the beaches, the lines of the sand-cliffs, the ragged horizon edge, cut and jagged by the waves. I feel the boat, I feel the oars, I am aware of the damp, pure night air, and the sounds of the waves ceaselessly breaking on the sand.

It is not over. Its best things are still ours, and those things which were hardly pleasures then have become such now. As we remember our aching muscles and blistered hands, we smile. As we recall times of intense weariness, of irritation, of anxiety, we find ourselves lingering over them with enjoyment. For memory does something wonderful with experience. It is a poet, and life is its raw

material. I know that our cruise was made up of minutes, of oar-strokes, so many that to count them would be weariness unending. But in my memory, these things are re-created. I see a boundless stretch of windy or peaceful waters. I see the endless line of misty coast. I see lovely islands, sleeping alone, waiting to be possessed by those who come. And I see a little, little boat, faring along the coast-lands, out to the islands, over the waters — going on, and on, and on.

THE END

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